

PIOUS REFLECTIONS,
AND
DEVOUT PRAYERS,
ON
SEVERAL POINTS
OF
FAITH AND MORALITY,
FROM MAN'S CREATION
TO HIS CONSUMMATION.



By the very Reverend Father NICOLAS
of the holy Cross, Exprovincial of
the English Recollects, and Cha-
pelain in ordinary to her
Majesty of great
Britain.

DOWAY, By M. MAIRESSE

M. DC. XCV.

1695—

PIOUS AFFECTIONS

AND

DEVOUT PRAYERS

FOR

SEVERAL POINTS



FAITH AND Obedience

FROM MANY CHRISTIANS

TO HIS COMMUNION



By the very Reverend Father Nicolas
of the holy Church, Bishop of
the English Province, and
relate in conformity to the
Manner of great
Britain.

DONAY, 1611, 1612, 1613

no other way than by the



TO HER MOST
EXCELLENT MAJESTY,
MARY

QUEEN OF GREAT BRITAIN &c.

MADAM,

*The great Apostle Saint James,
declares that al our blessings of na-
ture, grace, or Glory, descend from
above from the father of light, in
Whom is found no shadow of vicif-
situde, or change: that we can lay
no offerings upon our Altars which*

have not parted from his hands:
in fine, that we can give him no-
thing that is not of his own. Yet
there is one thing, and that alone
we can call ours, which is gratitude,
and that only God expects from us,
because tis a voice which loudly pro-
claims our dependency, and his
greatness.

Now, MADAM, sovereign
Princes are in the next degree of ob-
liging their subjects: first we owe
unto them the duty of observance
and obedience, which exact a great
part of what we have, or can do,
as tributary to their Dignity: next,
when they are pleased to superadd
any liberality of their own, it ren-
ders us so incapable of a return,
that we find a necessity of having

recours to our propriety of nature as rational, which is gratitude: for the Eminence of a Benefactor adds much to the value of the gift, and consequently to aspire to a compensation is a kind of presumption in a subject to his sovereign.

Saint Thomas in his rules of gratitude prescribes that after our discharg of thanks, honor, and respect to our Benefactor, we ought to make a return, if not proportionable to the gift received, at least to the utmost of our ability: hence wil appear to your Majesty my poor condition, that after all the acknowledgments that can issue from a grateful heart for your unprixable favours, after al the testimonies of submission, and veneration due to your greatnes, and

after al my wordes, and prayers to
render Heaven propitious to your
temporal, and eternal felicity, I have
only to offer in return these faint re-
flections, the products of a winter
season and soyl: yet thô they want
the freshnes of an early growth,
I solace my self with this, that an
Evening sacrifice has oft conveyd a
pleasing odour to our supream Lord,
who is the objective beatitude of men
and Angels. Howrever if this mean
present be so happy as to find a be-
nign acceptance at your Majesties
hands, I skal no more repine at the
severity of old age, since it has in-
dulged me so far as to let me offer
up to your Majesty this last pledg
of my respect and duty.

Besides, your gracious condescen-

dence to my long vvish't for retreat,
in order to my reassuming a peni-
tential habit, (from vvhich I had
near fifty years been sequestred upon
the score of God and my country's
service) has allowed me time to ru-
minate upon these high concerns of
a Christian, and consequently what
ever fruit this retirement has produ-
ced, justly belongs to your Majesty:
for what is cause of the cause, is
likewise cause of the effect.

Nay, I must further attest it to
be yours; for having penn'd a scan-
tling of these reflections at the request
of a friend, it hapned to fall into
your Majesties hands; and after
the perusal your Majesty was plea-
sed to witness such a satisfaction in
the reading, as is put me upon the
task of composing these few additions.

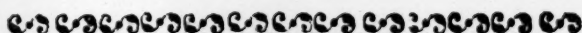
Now , MADAM , Providence
having so ordaind, that it came out
of the press, a little before that au-
spicious day which disclosed unto us
a glorious sun, our hopeful Prince of
Wales, who revives the almost wi-
ther'd hopes of al your true subjects,
and makes them blossom forth anew,
I say this pleasing reflection made
me venture to present to your Ma-
jesty on that blessed day, together
with these, a hymn of thanksgiving
for that pretious gift, in whom is
comprised (after your Royal Con-
sort) al we can expect of happines
to our unfortunate Country; and
I hope also this powerful attractive
may invite your Majesty the more
frequently to take into your hands

*these poor fragments of devotion.
Thus with al humility, and in al
duty I subscribe*

YOUR MAJESTY'S,

Most obedient Subject, devoted
Orator, and Chaplain unwor-
thy.

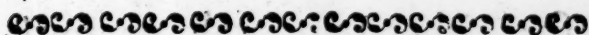
B. NICOLAS of the
holy Cross.



A H Y M N

Of thanksgiving for our Prince
of Wales, alluding to the
Blessed Trinity, on whose
feast he was born.

IF gifts be rated by the Donor's worth,
He is unprisable who brought thee forth.
What God bestows, is always understood
A present for his Glory, and our good.
On this sure ground (great Prince) our
hopes do lean; 20 JY 63
For Heaven is just, tho malice intervene.
Mean while al Loyal hearts rejoyce to see,
The preludes of their happines in thee.
How Grace and nature sweetly coinsphere,
To make thee object of their love and fear.
Thy taking humour like a morning gray,
Grows more serene, and pleasant, as the day.
When riper years shal radiate thy mind,
O mayst thou prove delight of al mankind.
Bless'd in thy self, thy people bless'd in thee;
Bless'd in thy God, the Blessed Trinity.
Amen.



THE PRAYER,
TO THE BLESSED TRINITY.

B Right Sun of mysteries, ô blessed Trinity , Father, Son , and Holy Ghost , from whom all other mysteries of our faith derive their resplendent beams, it is to you we ow our Creation, Conservation and power to act; it is from you, great Three and One, we have receivd a Redeemer, who was Sacrificed to purchase grace for us by the effusion of his precious blood, and in vertue of that, all other means conducing to salvation. In fine, all the blessings we posses or hope

for, either temporal, or spiritual, are the effects of your benign influences. Nowwhilst we enumerate these your liberalities, ô Blessed Trinity, it were high ingratitude to pass over in silence this Choice one of your inexhausted bounty; to wit, our hopeful Prince of Wales; whom we acknowledg to be your munificent gift, and therefore permit us to lay him at the foot of your sacred Altar, and from thence convey unto your supream Majesty the perfumes of praise and thanksgiving; that on this day of your great solemnity, a son is born unto us, design'd we hope by your al-powerful hand to be a

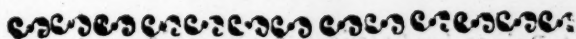
Prince of peace ; to settle our
unfortunate distracted Nation,
which for many late years past
has by a strange stupidity ob-
structed your mercy and its
own happines. Next our hum-
ble petition in his behalf is,
that when the Crown (of which
he is heir apparent) shal be
due to him , he may quietly
enter into possession : Then
may he be inspired to shelter
his three Kingdoms under the
patronage of you , ô August
Trinity , and that his power
of Majesty may equally sway
in al his Dominions. Give him
wisdom likewise to govern ac-
cording to your Holy laws :
give him a heart of Iustice , to

reward merit , and punish offenders by this means may he purchase to himself the love and fear of his people, the two main pillars of a Crown. Lastly, after a happy raign, and a life attempered with al Christian and Princely vertues, may he exchange an earthly Crown, for one Celestial.

Amen.

20 JY 63





A H Y M N

On the birth of his Royal Highnes

THE PRINCE OF WALES,

The hopes of our Crown, and
the Crown of our hopes.

Quis putas puer iste erit? Luc. i.

Great God, whose al-wise Providence,
Is the Prime Mobile from whence
Al Human Action flows:

But with a more endearing Love,
With a peculiar care above,

Does Kings and Crowns dispose:
Accept the Tribute of the praise,
Which every loyal subject pays,

At this most happy hour,
When all-propitious Heaven did smile,
And signal Blessings on our Ile
Did prodigally pour.

When you a kind of Saviour sent:
A Prince, our longing Heart's content:
A favour undeserv'd:

A Prince by Providence conceiv'd,
By Wonder from the grave retriev'd;
By Miracle preserv'd:
Sure, gracious God, this shou'd presage,
He'll be the Phanix of the Age;
England's Redemption's near;
Since James and JESUS so agree,
Since 'twixt 'em such affinity
Does hitherto appear.

As JESUS in his Crib was cross'd,
As JESUS here and there was tosst,
And so to glory past:
O may our hope's reviver too,
From suff'ring to his glory go,
And so be crown'd at last.

To fit him for this great design,
Give him, Good God, a soul divine,
A brave heroick heart:

May graces all concenter there,
Vertue and Valour co-insphere;
The nation to convert.

So into Hymns the noise of wars;
Lightning of Cannons into stars,
Wil soon converted be;
To Pearls our tears,
To Joys our fears,
And ev'ry soul to thee.



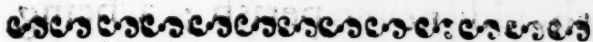
THE PROEM.

WHEN I consider (O my God) those infinite mercies you have bestowed on me the most unworthy of your creatures, I confess it puts me to a stand; so far they surpass any return I can make: however, I resolve not to be stained with the guilt of ingratitude: wherefore for every benefit of yours, which are as so many testimonies of

(2)

your Love, I present you vvith
as many thanks from a grateful
heart: and since by no obsequi-
ousnes of mine, I can reach to a
ful compensation, I wil at
least return love for love.





I. A MEDITATION

ON THE BENEFITS OF MANS CREATION.

Consider that God, amidst a mass of creatures he designed to make happy, was pleased to draw me out of nothing, and give me a being: next, that his sovereign power left Millions of creatures in their nothing, at the same time he gave me being, who deseru'd it no more than they; so that it was a pure effect of his kindness in preferring me before them. Again, he not only confer'd on me a simple being, but an eternal one, which

should never perish ; a being
 indow'd with reason, and En-
 nobling this my being with
 knowledg , with liberty , and
 with a Law ; that I might know
 my Creator , that with a free
 wil I might acknowledg my
 dependance on him, and receive
 his commands : lastly , that
 I might be the more easily in-
 duc'd to pay him the just tri-
 bute of obedience , he subjected
 al the creatures of this infe-
 rior world to mans Dominion:
 nay fram'd the sun, moon, and
 those celestial bodies , for his
 use and convenience. Hence
 I consider the eminent dignity
 of man, that was constituted
 Lord and master of the uni-

vers; Lions and Tigers Were
 aw'd at the majesty of his looks;
 al other creatures at his beck,
 and gining to every one its name
 conformable to its nature :
 by which it appears how per-
 fectly he knew their proprieties
 and instincts , so the better to
 manage them to the end for
 which they were created. No
 storms or tempests , nothing
 in disorder while he preserv'd
 his innocence : al the seasons
 of the year kind and suitable to
 their productions ; no malig-
 nant vapors to blast a fresh
 complexion ; al things conspi-
 ring to deliciate his senses.

REFLEXION.

The necessity of grace.

THe gift of creation is highly to be valued, and justly merits our acts of gratitude; but that of conservation seems to lay a greater obligation upon us, because it is a favour without intermission: for creation is but one act in our Maker, whereas Conservation is a production repeated as it were every moment. The like is requisite also in the being of grace, for without a continual supply of that supernatural quality, we presently slip back into sin. Hence the condi-

tion of Man seems very deplorable, when on the one side we consider his tye of a constant gratitude for the creation, and conservation both of nature and grace, and on the other, his weakness and imbecility to perform what is good. The sacred text abundantly sets forth this inability; affirming that we can not frame a good thought, nay not so much as desire to do it without the grace of God. Saint Austin says none can move towards their Salvation, without God inviting; that none invited can effect any thing without God assisting; lastly, he assists none to carry on their good works to the end, unless sued

to, by an humble supplication.

As to the first, that is exciting grace, he offers it to al : for he enlightens al men who enter in to the world. As to sanctifying grace, he bestovvs it where he finds a disposition on our side to receive it : for nature teaches that forms are not introduc'd but into subjects dispos'd forthem : the soul of a beast informs not the trunck of a tree, nor a rational soul the body of a beast, because their is no disposition in the matter : so grace, being a supernatural form, enters not in to a soul unprepar'd for it.

The remote dispositions unto grace are moral acts of vir-

due ; as to give to every one what is his due : to relieve the distressed out of a natural compassion of their miseries : or when a sinner prays to be freed from his sins without doing any thing more to the effect of his prayer.

The immediate disposition unto grace is usually reduced to the three Theological Vertues ; Faith , Hope , and Charity , or Contrition : by Faith we captivate our understanding, and our Reason to the obedience of reveal'd truths; so that faith is the beginning and Basis of our salvation. Hope rises to the expectation of eternal felicity , by the means of

grace (Which is gratis given)
 and good works ; for could we
 attain to our Salvation by the
 strength of our natural facul-
 ties , a Redeemer had been to
 us unnecessary ; Fear , humility ,
 Prayer , thanksgiving , and a
 sense of divine mercy , would
 have found no admittance in
 our presumptuous minds : where-
 fore God has decreed not
 to part with the pretious gift
 of grace unless we do him the
 honor to expect it from his
 hands , and perform something
 on our part . Charity unites us
 to God by a love of Bene-
 volence , rendring delightful
 to us what is so to him , as also
 displeasing what is distastful to

him : so that we are carryed on to contrition by a motive of charity which may justly be termed a loving dolor , or a dolorous Love. To conclude , our salvation depends on God and our selves ; let us play our part and we are secure. That God requires our cooperation is an effect of his goodnes , for whilst we dispose our selves by our own actions he makes us as it vvere partners vwith him ; by this means our supream felicity is derived unto us in the most noble vway of purchase , that is , by the cooperation of our free vvill , joyned vwith the principal cause of our justification , vvwhich is Gods love and mercy.

As for its final effects of perseverance he only expects we should ask ; and can there be any thing more indulgent then to see a hand open to give, if we will but open our lips to demand. Now in this last requisit, our unfortunate parent Adam was deficient, for trusting to his own condition, which appeared so happy as to want nothing but his consummated felicity, behold him left to himself : and then what succeeded ? he began to disdain to keep the garden of another, he would be a Proprietor, and be like unto God ; hence immediately he was dispoyled of his possessions, thrown out of

Paradise, disturbed by rebellious passions, clouds cast over his understanding, which depriv'd him of the specious rays of knowledg which God had given him; naked, because stript of the vesture of innocence: poor, having forfeited with his innocence al his treasures and sovereignty. O how the scene is changed! how disastrous are the effects of sin! by this sad example we may learn the necessity of preserving grace: for if in heaven and Paradise this was requisite, much more ought we who are weakned by the venom of original sin, fear the want of this constant stream of grace:

we may therefore conclude, it is our part to vvork our Salvation vvith fear and trembling, Saint Paul assuring vve can not perform the least good act unless begun , held on , and perfected (so as to render it meritorious) vvithout the assisting grace of God.

Spiritual masters prescribe two principal expedients by vvhich vve may preserve our selves in the state of grace : the one is prayer : vvhole povver is such , that could the treasury of God be exhausted, prayer vvould do it; for Christ our Lord hath engaged his vvord never to deny vvhat is demanded by fervent prayer. Nay

S. Chrysostom says that God hoards up blessings for us, and expects only our petition to deliver them out : as if Iustice obliged him by virtue of his promise to accord vvhat vve ask. Nay it has not only power to dravv from him blessings, but likewise to tye up his hands that he inflict not Iust punishments upon offenders : howv sweetly did God expostulate vvith Moyles that hee should cease to pray : and vvhy? because he might have liberty to fall heavy upon his ungrateful people. Novv vvhist vve read these vvonders, is it not a greater vvonder howv man comes to be miserable,

howv he can grudg thanks for his creation and shamefully sink from a state of grace, having such a poverful engin as that of prayer, to settle, and secure to him his final end.

But to take off som part of our admiration , you must know this irresistable effect of prayer is annex'd to certain conditions , without vvhich God lends not his ear to our supplications; thô they appear never so humble and earnest: the first is , it must be for somthing that conduces to salvation: next, it must issue from pure lips, and from a heart innocent, and unstain'd vvith sin: the last is , that vve perfectly
for-

forgive our enemies, as vve desire God should forgive us: if any of these be wanting it may evacuate the force of prayer, and render it ineffectual.

The next expedient is to avoid dangerous occasions of sin: we posses our treasure in brittle caskets; one wanton glance, or amorous expression, hath oft wrought a flaw in the cristal innocence of persons who were looked upon like Cedars eminent in vertue and sanctity. Wherefore if we prove so happy as to be restored to grace by participation of the Sacraments, tho our wounds be closed up, yet remember our enemies are not

so quel'd , but they may rally;
 and make another attempt:
 our passions, and il habits have
 not so given up al their right
 to reason and piety, as to se-
 cure us from a second revolt
 and muriny: no, no, we ought
 to live in a continual distrust
 of our selves , we ought to
 hold pretious the least degree
 of grace, since it is steeped in
 the bloud of IESUS-CHRIST;
 a flower produced of a thorn
 from his head , and a balm
 composed of his sweat and
 tears. It vvas the sense of mans
 frailties that occasioned y^e great
 servants of God to shrowd
 themselves into deserts , and
 little cells , that they might

not expose unto hazard ; and render fruitless the inestimable benefits of our creation , conservation and redemption ; let us remember then the caution our Blessed Saviour gave to his Disciples, that whilst they enjoyed light, they should preserve themselves in light ; that is in grace, for so they might be enabled to break throu the mists of sin which involue them in the darkness of ingratitude and preserve to themselves the happy title of being the sons of light.



THE PRAYER.

DIvine artist, who hast framed man to your own Image and likeness, and designed him for supreme felicity, yet with a continual dependance on the exhibition of your graces : and this doubtless out of an endearing providence : that whilst by our prayers we draw your blessings upon us, we at the same time might be mindful of the hand from whence they parted : grant, we beseech you, that in rendering constant acts of gratitude we may not only proserve your favours, but also encrease them : until richly laden with merits we arrive at the land of Promise where we are to receive the last

*streaks of your immense love in
Eternal beatitude. Amen.*

II. THE BENEFITS
OF THE SACRAMENTS;
ESPECIALY OF PENNANCE.

After the shipwreck of
Adam, our great and
good God vvas stil pleased to
retain the bowels of compas-
sion, and resentment of love
towards his unfortunate chil-
dren. Wherefore in the pleni-
tude of time he sent his only
son to pay our ransom, and
restore us to the right of our
lost inheritance: novv as his
providential care had allotted

remedies for our corporal infirmities, no less vvas he solicitous to provide against the vvounds vve might receive by sin throu the vveaknes of our nature impaired by an original stain : to this end he instituted the Sacram. vvwhich should smooth unto us the vvay of salvation , and be as certain aqueducts to conuey the merits and graces he has purchased for us by his pretious blood and passion : and since Christ came to enact a lavv of grace he reserv'd the institution of such Sacraments as confer an inherent Sanctity , until his coming , as the most seasonable time both

to Issue forth the testimonies of his love and mercy , as also to releive poor man so fastned to earth , that , without great difficulty he could not apply himself to works of piety in that degree as to attain unto grace : but we wil here in particular consider the Sacrament of Pennance usualy stiled the second plank after shipwreck , together with the difficulties that occur in the performance , as also the benefits arising from thence , so to counterballance the apprehended rigors which attend it.



REFLEXION.

The comfort of Confession.

VERTUE has this happy circumstance annexed unto it, that the face of difficulties affright not, nay rather it begets a greater animosity, like to the sight of blood which adds rage to Elephants: the reason is, where there is more of hardship, there is more of merit. In the civil law to conceal a conspiracy against the King or commonwealth, tho' to preserve a friend, a near relation, nay even a Parent, is esteem'd petty treason; but at the tribunal of Penance to conceal a mortal

trespas is an act of high treason, and the punishment decreed for it, beyond that of drawing and quartering.

The first essential part of this Sacrament is sorrow, which disposes for pardon. Now the sorrow which is absolutely necessary, and no less will suffice, is called attrition : it springs from an apprehension of eternal punishment, or privation of eternal glory : and albeit this implies our own interest, yet there is intermingled with it a fear of being set at perpetual enmity with God, or of incurring the loss of enjoying him in whom is compris'd the felicity of Saints : both which

suppose a knowledg of God by an act of faith , which is a gift of the Holy Ghost ; representing the horrors of Hel, and the happines of Heaven. Observe likewise, that no sorrow which is purely natural can reach (thô joyn'd with the Sacrament) to the remission of sin , because the Holy Ghost , who alone is the source of al Sanctification, does not work there.

Next, you are to know that this sorrow implies a firm purpose never to relaps : and this firm purpose includes the avoiding al imminent dangers of sin, without which the purpose is trifling, and as it were

none : it is like ' says Saint Bonaventure) one that resolves no more to be burnt , yet stil walks amidst flames : hence it is that many persever in their wicked ways notwithstanding they frequent this Sacrament ; while they dally with occasions of sin, and yet hope to continue innocent ; a thing as possible as to be always handling pitch , and never dawb our fingers.

The second essential part of pennance is confession , a remedy that seems bitter , and bears the face of severity : for nothing is more repugnant to nature then to betray ones self; yet to this we are obliged in

this Sacrament how then can it be a blessing when so severe? the reason is, because it leads us to perform heroick acts of vertue; as to overcome our selves, which is a greater victory then that of Lions: it puts us upon the task of knowing our selves, which is the highest science; for there is not a puff of vanity within us, a grain of Pride, a spark of concupiscence, envy, revenge, or the like, but must be sifted, and layd open: and tho' this be harsh to sense, it is not so to reason, that considers the exuberant fruits which countervail the strugglings of nature. What large promises were made to Abraham for

his obedience to Sacrifice his son? A penitent doth more; he sacrifices his shame and bashfulness, his strong inclination to hide his imperfections: in a word, he becomes a perfect Holocaust, accusing himself to be a sinner, which is to say, a moral nothing; nay he is carried on so far as to acknowledg that which al men abhor, that is, to be ungrateful; Many have been content to bear the character of other crimes, but to be an ingrate is a monster in nature, and no vvhere found to be ovvnd, or acknowvleg'd, but in the Sacrament of penance. Wherefore if selfdenyal sets a value upon good

vvorks, tis no vvhere practi-
 sed so to the life as in Confes-
 sion; and consequently selflove
 is subdued, vvhich is a great
 step to perfection; hence you
 see that to fit our selves for the
 due discharg of Confession;
 vve are excited to the most
 generous acts of Christian ver-
 tues, as humility, selfdenyal,
 and a perfect survey of our
 ovvn misery.

Besides, if you consider with
 an unbyassd understanding the
 laying open of your most se-
 cret defects in this Sacrament,
 you wil find no such horror
 as you imagin; nay tis a great
 relief in any disaster: for when
 overpressd with any affliction

(abstracting from any divine precept) what a comfort it is to have a friend to whom I can securely unbreast my self, and dilate upon my aggrivances? and tho' he can afford me no remedy, yet tis an ease to discourse of my misfortunes with him: how much more Consolatory is it then, when charged with sin, to fly to the sanctuary of this Sacrament, where I find the securest repository of my great concern, a friendship above all the most disinterested; that is, a person employ'd by Heaven, whose office is to Compassionate my condition, to imprint in me a horror of my crimes, and after

pious instructions for future prevention, has power to give me an act of oblivion for all that is past, supposing a sincere repentance, and a firm purpose never to relaps.

Hence I wonder not on great solemnities to behold Confessionals beset with Penitents, all pressing for audience, that their misdeeds may be raz'd out from the eternal book of accounts, and they return lightsom, enrich'd with a new being, more prizable then a human, nay Angelical being, precisely considered in the Order of nature: I say to behold this passionate crowding to be disburthen'd of their sins,
were

were enough methinks to convince , that it can not be the effect of policy, but must needs issue from a divine power and institution.

Satisfaction is the finishing part of pennance : for the sin, or guilt, is taken away before, by vertue of the other precedent parts , as also the eternal punishment due to sin is exchanged into a temporal satisfaction , which is sacramental , enjoyn'd by the Priest , besides what the penitent does of his own accord by fasting, prayer , alms , or any work of piety ; it contributes likewise to compleat this sacrifice of justice: so Saint Ambrose terms

it ; for 'tis just that reparation should be made of Gods honour taken away by sin , and as by unlawful pleasures we have trespassed against his holy commands , so in our persons tis fit we feel the smart of our misdeeds.

After this Anatomy of penance , let us see what advantages accrue to a penitent, and whether they may not justly be put into the ballance with the bitter ingredients whereof it is compos'd.

First we are taught by faith that this sacrament , performd with al due circumstances, enriches us with sanctifying grace which sin had destroyd in us ;

So that of sinners we become just. It is true we approach like slaves laden with chains, but tis to the end they may be filed off: we approach as enemies to God, but with hopes to return his friends, reconciled to the eternal Father; by the merits of Christ's death and Passion, whose precious blood trickles down upon us thro' the Conduit of this reviving Sacrament.

The next effect of penance is, that by the remission of sin, those acts of vertue which in themselves were good, but withered and blasted while deprived of grace, do recover their verdure, and spring forth

into merit whensoever a soul is reconciled to God by this sacrament of penance.

Lastly, it enlivens the expiring soul to that height that she seems even to have gain'd by her fatal blow : Cardinal Hugo giving to it in som consideration a prerogative beyond that of innocence : so much the lost sheep is valued, that acknowledging his fault and promising amendment is born on the shepherds shoulders, as if in preference to the other ninety nine. For there is nothing more knotty then to break the chains of vice, and pass into the freedom of vertue : because man is hamperd in the

allurements of y^e flesh, in y^e nets of the world, and the wiles of Satan: so that to extricate himself from these engagements, and pass from vice to vertue is n^o s^om sense more then never to have known what sin is: as Saint Ambrose says, the memory to have fallen from justice wil render a penitent more ambitious to raise himself in the way of lustice and Piety.

How justly then may this Sacrament be termd a recreation or gift of a new being, more prizable then that of our Creation which cost Almighty God only but one word, one single *Fiat*, while this other

was not purchased but at the rate of his bitter death and passion. Wherefore you ought never to approach to this Tribunal without an humble acknowledgment of mercy, and immortal thanks for the supernatural production of grace, the greatest of benefits derived unto us by this Sacrament.

T H E P R A Y E R.

O God, I adore your wisdom, which by an admirable contrivance has so dispensed your liberalities in this sacrament of penance as to oblige us to search into the depth, and nature of our wounds by sin, that being conscious of the

danger it might render us the more
 solicitous to seek a remedy, and be-
 com the more grateful for the cure:
 I adore no less your goodnes in pres-
 cribing such ingredients, as being
 exactly prepared wil not only set
 us right in our claim to your
 Kingdom, but also Encrease our
 treasures there: Grant therefore, I
 beseech you, that approaching to this
 Holy sacrament, my love may be
 disinterested, the account of my fai-
 lings made without disguise, and
 my return for what I ow compleatly
 just: this done, I claim your sacred
 promise that the pardon I receive
 here, may be ratified in Heaven.
 Amen.

III. THE BENEFIT OF AFFLICTION.

L Et us consider the nature of a Benefit which consists either in the preservation from som Evil, or in the collation of som good, and this either at present, or by certain means to lead us to it : now this definition very aptly quadrates with afflictions; for adversity gives check to the most part of those vices incident to mankind : ad is the securest clue to guide us to our final end and soveraign good. Whereas on the contrary, Prosperity

draws us from the practise of
 vertue, carries us on to plea-
 sures, and a neglect of our du-
 ty to God: stifling in us al re-
 membrance we ow to the au-
 thor of our Being. David, whilst
 under the persecution of Saul,
 was a man according to Gods
 own heart, but when victorious
 over his Enemies, in the enjoy-
 ment of al ease and plenty,
 he is staine with the crimes of
 Adultery and homicide. His
 son Salomon, floating in a sea
 of prosperity, became the most
 unfortunate of men: in a word,
 our Blessed Saviour confirms
 this truth by an open decla-
 ration, that those are happy
 who suffer persecution for ju-

stice sake : adding, that theirs
is the Kingdom of Heaven.

REFLEXION.

*Affliction the true badg of a
Christian:*

THat we might not repine
at our condition in this
mortal life, which is a warfare
upon earth, beset with dan-
gers and hardship; our sweet
Redeemer makes use of an ar-
gument to his disciples, (and
in them to all mankind) un-
answerable, and which admits
of no reply, saying, I have
prepared a Kingdom for you,
but tis upon the same terms
my father gave it me; I have

made this purchase for you at a dear rate , wherefore you must be content to go som little share ; but vvithal he hints this comfort, that tho the world should rejoyce , and they be sad , yet their sadnes should be converted in to endles joy: nay he adds yet a more charming reason to keep up our spirits in afflictions ; the world (says he) wil persecute you because you are mine , so that when we suffer for justice sake, he owns it his quarrel , and wil not fail to render us victorious if with firm footing we stand the brunt but one moment : for indeed the cours of this life is but a moment , nay not

so much in respect of Eternity.

With what unwearied labors , and sometimes breaking al the chains of nature and justice , nay enduring the tortures of a guilty conscience , are men carried on to the purchase of an earthly Crown , whilst with patience a quiet submission to Divine Providence , which presides in human affairs , together with the harmony of an innocent interior , we may secure to our selves a Crown Eternal, and which shal never be ravish'd from us. Tis just then that those who stand Candidates for Eternity, should not boggle at the conditions

proposed by the Son of God for its acquisition : he was not Crownd with glory til the Jews had first placed a Diadem of thorns upon his head : he tasted not the sweets of consolation, before he had tasted gall and vinegar : and why al this ? Saint Peter tells us, that we might trace his steps : believing that nothing could have a greater influence to imitation then the prospect of his own actions. Saint Paul assures us that whom God has predestinated, those he moulds to the resemblance of his only son, cloaths them in the same livery, marks them with the same stamp, and gives them

the impression of sufferings with his own seal : wherefore I wonder not if the Just be stiled by Saint Peter the stones of life, design'd for the structure of the Cœlestial Hierusalem, since they are daily pared with the chizel of adversity , the better to square them for a place in that noble edifice.

Christ our Lord as man , both by word in the Pater Noster, and by example on the Cross, manifested his perfect submission to the wil of his eternal Father , who had decreed he should not enter in to his glory but by the way of suffering : why should not we likewise acknowledg an ab-

solute dependance on his sacred dispensations as to our concerns in this life ? let him smile or frown upon us we are sure tis for our good. Our obedience ought to imitate the nature of faith ; which teaches its sublime mysteries are not to be dived in to by the sharpnes of our wit ; but with a kind of simple wisdom ; Embraced, Believed, and Adored. So in adversity, our mind, as relating to Divine providence, ought to be blinded , and no reason discussd why God does wil , or permit us to suffer. Abraham when he received that severe command to sacrifice his son , stilled al human , nay Divine

reason which might any ways put a stop to his obedience, and struggling against the light of reason, and tendernes of a father he proceeds to the Execution of Gods Orders. Wherefore we ought to look upon it as a testimony of our faith when wisely we understand not the mysterious proceedings of providence in our particular concerns: leaving our inordinate Wil to be regulated by the unerring direction of the Divine wil. The chief felicity of the Blessed consists in this, that the wil of God is become their vvil; could vve attain to this conformity, vve should be above malice, or misfortunes:

nes : and as the Philosophers stone turns al it touches into Gold, so should our patience convert al pain into pleasure and al anguish into delights.

How justly then may afflictions be termed the benefits of God since by them we are made the lively images of his son, and by that similitude vve hold our title and claim to his rich inheritance : vvhy then should vve not set a value on sicknes, los of our goods, or any other unexpected misfortune, vvhen patience and resignation vvil infallibly open us a passage into heaven?

After this Divine Artist had labour'd to shape us to his ovvn

likenes by sufferings; the next
 topick he lays hold on to keep
 us in this form and mould;
 is in representing to us the little
 duration vvhich attends our
 afflictions here : the holy scrip-
 ture delineates to us the bre-
 vity of this life under several
 Emblems , as of a flower, a
 shadowv, a blast of vvind, and
 the like; al to set forth hovv
 soon it slides avvay : sometimes
 involving the shortnes vvith
 its misery , tis compared to a
 vvoman in labor, vvwhose pangs
 are very smart, but not lasting;
 and the pain is mitigated by ex-
 pectation of a son : by which
 is insinuated that the hopes of
 Beatitude ought to sweeten

al the bitternes of aduersity.

That great Apostle Saint Paul , vvho received his commission from heaven to instruct the Gentils , tels them in the first place that the time of this life is short ; he adds , that if they be under pressures, they may vveep , but so as if they did not vveep; that if they had a day of sunshine they might rejoyce, but so as if they only made vvrinkles in their face : that they might make use of vvhat goods they found here, but in such a manner as if they vv ere vvholly indifferent; and he gives the reason , because there is nothing here vve cā call ours : lince vve are not secure

of the possession for on sole moment: consequently vve are not sayd properly to posses it : vvhwherefore tis only like a fine Parade , only to be seen in passing , being always in motion.

Saint Gregory makes a large Panegyric of afflictions , first in that it compels us to fly onto God , for when our Saviour had foretold his Disciples the scandals of his Passion , and how the world would allot the same measure to them , he tels them why these sharp decrees are made ; because (says he) you should fly to me for sanctuary , and only within my arms seek consolation and

security. Again afflictions draw God to us, for he declares by the Royal Prophet he cannot leave the afflicted alone: wherefore you must not think in tribulation, that God is not with you, nor that you are abandoned, if he free you not when you would: for he humors not your wil, but does that which is most expedient for your good.

In fine, Saint Gregory says the just are like to fire wrapt up in a flint, not a spark appears unles forced out by violence: so the vertue of good persons are undiscovered til afflictions make them break forth: tis then their patience,

their submission to Gods decrees , their little concern to be stript of worldly treasures , draw upon them the eyes and admiration of men : tis then they wisely consider the instability of worldly greatnes , the little satisfaction in sensual pleasures and how fleeting is the time allowed them for the enjoyment. O how happy then are they who fix their hearts on that Eternal recompence which is to be the guerdon of al their labors and sufferings , and how blessed are afflictions , which play the loadstone in drawing them to their final end and sovereign good.

THE PRAYER.

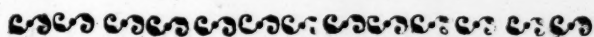
O God whose judgments are an Abyss, not to be fathomed by our weak apprehensions, and whose proceedings are not by our poor reason to be searched into; I perfectly submit to your Decrees of suffering in this life, by vertue of which our chains do purchas liberty, and the harsh stroaks of persecution become caresses of love, preparing us for an eternal reward: O let me be reckon'd in the number of your children; may your breast be so embittered as to wean me from the sweet milk of the worlds delights, that being nourish'd for the future with the solid food of patience, resignation, and other Chri-

*stian virtues , I may be thought
worthy to appear in your presence ,
and partake of those ineffable joys
reserved for such as suffer here for
your name. Amen.*

THE PROEM. OF SIN.

MY God, after the meditation of your mercyes and benefits , who could imagine (had not dear experience convinced us) there could be such a monster as sin : good turns penetrate the highest mountains , overcome Tygers , yet they work nothing with ungrateful man : give me leave to descant upon this wonder , that finding out the accursed cause which gives birth to sin

it may be stifled, and no more
destroy infortunate souls.



IV. THAT SIN IS OPPOSIT TO REASON.

WHat a horrour to consider how monstrous a thing sin is, that doth evacuate al the designs of God in mans creation! for what contrivance has not our dear Creator set on foot to preserve us in innocence: first imprinting in our natures an innate inclination to felicity; then strengthening this tendency with gracious promises of a Beatitude which comprizes al good

imaginable : and lest the Charms of happines might not prove sufficiently efficacious to keep us in our duty , he was pleased to add the terrors of the greatest desolation that can enter into our thoughts : but alas man is so unfortunate, as neither the love of happines , nor the fear of misery , can give a stop to bridle his inordinate appetite unto Evil.

REFLEXION.

Sin is a sort of madness.

ALmighty God designing to make himself our final end , was pleased to prescribe a rule which we are to

observe that we may arrive at this our ultimate Term : this rule is , *to decline what is opposit to reason , and by Him prohibited, and perform what is conformable to reason, and by him enjoynd.* Here we behold the goodnes of God , that having subjected al the Creatures of this inferior world unto man ; him alone, as a noble Creature endued with knowledg and understanding , he would honor with his commands : and such as the prevarication of them seems a mystery hard to be unriddled. For in the first place he forbids nothing but what our reason goes along with, and judges not fit to be don : nor does he command any-

thing but what our own reason
 approves, as fit to be put in
 execution. Hence a sinner at
 the latter day with great con-
 fusion wil find his own reason
 to rise up , accuse , and play
 the chief witnes against him.
 wherefore I wonder not if
 Saint Basil stile sin a branch
 of madnes , for is it possible
 that one in his right wits should
 wave the courtship of a God
 omnipotent , who hath fill'd
 him with blessings here, and re-
 serves more for him in Heaven;
 to dote with an inordinate af-
 fection upon a creature that is
 a sink of corruption , and has
 nothing to make him great or
 happy : to quitt the author of

reason and lasting joys for a moments pleasure. Nay, the same Saint affirms that by sin we lose our first understanding which is rational, as if to it succeeded another which savours of a Brutish nature, so he seems to infer that the soul by inordinate acts becomes as it were earthly and falls from the dignity of its creation.

The first effect of sin's frenzy we behold in Lucifer and his adherents; for they knew before their rebellious act, and believed God to be omnipotent, and that any attempt against him would end in their fatal ruin: yet when once they had given consent to what

Pride, and ambition prompted, like furious beasts devoyd of reason they struck at his Throne and Scepter : for which they were banished Heaven , doomed to Eternal flames, and above al, their greatest punishment is, not to be able to stifle their reproaching reason , nor forget the loss of their sovereign good they have incurrd. Thus we see that sin often pushes us on to attempt not only irrational , but even impossible things.

The next sad example we see in the disobedience of our first Parent Adam , who vested with original justice , endued with knowledg even to perfe-

ction, had his choice of al the delights that were in nature ; yet his dependence on God stuck in his stomach, he would be his own master , and like unto God : this tickled his fancy , and carried away with a passion of Pride, drew upon himself and posterity al the miseries now incident to mankind.

Thus we see the irregular motions of sin ; first infringing the laws of God , next the law of our reason and so destroys al that is man in us : for our understanding clouded with the darknes of sin, like one intoxicated with wine , knows he has a habitation,

but cannot make one right step to it : so a sinner has a confusd notion of his sovereign good, but overwhelm'd with passion, which is then his guide, he falls into a Labyrinth of vicious acts, which grown into a habit bring him at last to his inevitable ruin.

To conclude, this distemper by sin is more easily prevented then cured, because when once it has taken hold, al the power of nature cannot restore us to our former condition. Now this sovereign Antidote is Faith actuated and rouz'd up : for we believe a mortal sin deprives us of grace which is the greatest of misfortunes : we like-

likewise believe that by Gods assisting grace we may become victorious in any temptation; why then are we not? tis because our faith lyes a sleep, and is as it were dead in us: for did we consider what faith teaches concerning sin, we could not act so contrary to our own reason and eternal interest. Hence the Prophet Ieremy fore told that the earth would be filled with desolation because there is none who look before them, nor weigh the consequence of their actions. Thus an unfortunate sinner, declining the use and dictamens of faith, may justly be styld a Christian only in speculation, but in pra-

Etice a meer infidel , nay worse,
 for one has the gift and light
 of faith, whilest the other alas
 gropes only in the dusky light
 of nature.

Nay would men make use
 of their reason the very com-
 lines of vertue, and its interest
 would be sufficient to deter
 them from vitious actions: for
 the greatest part of mankind is
 influenced and attracted by
 what is either delightful, glo-
 rious, or beneficial; and in al
 these three vertue has the pre-
 eminence. If the humor of
 Ambition sway in you, what
 honor so great as to be good ?
 it draws veneration even from
 enemies, that albeit they pro-

secute their rage as to the exterior, yet they stil retain a value of the person in whom vertue shines. Princes receive not the duty of Obedience, nor Nobles the Ceremonies of respect, but upon supposition of vertue that resides, or ought to reside in them. Are you bewitched with the spel of Avarice? what treasure to be compared to those riches prepared in heaven for the reward of vertues? Riches, not liable to rust, nor to the fear of the hand of rapine. Besides, the competency they enjoy contributes by a moderate use to their health, disturbs not their sleep, and what is unnecessary is em-

ployd for the relief of the distressed, who are to be witnesses for their claim to eternal felicity. Are you infected with the poison of voluptuousness? virtue affords satisfaction of the mind, which being more pure and solid than those of the body, does consequently much outstrip them in worth and excellence. O what infatuation then to break the laws of God, our reason, and those of men, (for al human laws ordain punishment for sin) and by these exorbitancies forfeit the honor of virtue unstaind, unfading riches, and pure delights, which are not heel'd with repentance, infamy, nor a cha-

stisment without end, which are the usual consequences of unhappy sin.

THE PRAYER.

O God who art an increatèd wisdom, by whose directing beams we ought to steer our actions, amidst the inconstant waves of this floating world : enlighten my understanding with the splendour of your holy spirit, that by its influence dispersing the clouds of sin, my reason joynd with your grace, may preserve me within the limits of your holy commands, and prepare me for that crown of justice you have promised to those who prove faithful here in your service. Amen.

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A SINNER IS  
INJURIOUS TO GOD:

**T**Here is nothing more rational then to acknowledge that Gods supream greatnes exacts a reverence and respect from al creatures , that his infinit goodnes merits al love and fidelity : that his judicial power as being Judg of the living and the dead , ought to beget a fear and trembling in us : yet what a horreur to consider that a sinner denies him al these just rights : setting his laws and commands at naught, and by a strange impudence

daring to wrest his scepter from him; for God cannot be God unless he has an absolute command over all creatures; and this prerogative a sinner to his utmost refuses.

# REFLEXION.

*Sin is a perfect Rebellion.*

**T**Here is no crime in a Kingdom or Commonwealth so pernicious as that of rebellion; tis like a plague; for from one or two supremely factious spirits a whole kingdom is set in a flame: just so a sinner disperses his venom thron the whole frame of man, who is within himself

a little world : employing the noble endowments of his mind, to wit, his understanding, wil, and memory, which are the great perfections of his immortal soul, to that degree as to maintain a war against his sovereign.

First, whereas the understanding ought to represent unto the wil the happines of our final end, and the lovely shape of vertue, as the delightful means to attain unto it; on the contrary al blinded and overcast with the exhalations of sin, sets before the wil meer illusions and counterfeit objects, which bear the face of som little good, but intrinsically are pernicious,

leaving in conclusion nothing behind but a bitter and distasteful remembrance.

Again, whereas the wil has for its object what is good, nay cannot cover evil under the notion of evil, yet allured, and gained by the insulting appetite, embraces a creature in defiance of its Creator, loves what it should hate, and hates what it should love, shakes off al depédance on God (to serve whom is to raign) and exchanges this sweet servitude to become a slave to passions, which subject man to Avarice, Ambition, Lubricity, and to al the instruments that malice can frame, to the dishonor of his

Divine Lord and master : for having once induced him to actions below his reason , after this engagement no Tyranny like to this usurper: for he fills the memory with Ideas of sensual pleasures , wherein he is so mired , as nothing appears in him (besides his shape) that is not Brutish : in fine, he employs al his senses to be messengers of his wicked designs, so that the entire composure of a sinner , is an acurate piece of a Rebel, neither awed by majesty, terrifyed by power, nor submissive to authority.

Nay a sinner stops not in his own person , nor by his own faculties to condemn his



Creator, but makes use of the  
 creatures of this inferior world,  
 given him for his service and  
 moderate use, al these he per-  
 verts by his inordinate appe-  
 tite, to the injury of him that  
 gave them, and al this only,  
 to humour a Passion of vanity,  
 Pride, Love, revenge, or som  
 such unlawful motion. In re-  
 turn these creatures as sensible  
 of the il use made of them,  
 wil at the latter day vindicate  
 the honour of their Creator,  
 and the abase of their being,  
 acted by an ungrateful sinner;  
 every one in its Kind dischar-  
 ging their fury against him.

Lastly, the foulness of sin  
 appears in that the son of God

employed himself to destroy it; it was for that end he became man, spun out a laborious life of thirty three years to raze it out from the face of the earth : and to reduce man a strayed sheep into the path that leads to his final end, and sovereign good; so that when I sin, it may be truly said, I contemn and trample under foot, the pretious bloud, life, and death of the son of God; and frustrate, as far as lyes in me, the effects of his holy passion. I confes at al times sin appears in a frightful shape, but above al after Christs passion, what can be equal'd to the contempt of his person; of

al his sufferings, and to our ingratitude for so ineffable a tye and obligation : in this particular reflection of the time, a sinner exceeds the malice of Lucifer, for that struck only at Gods honour as he is a Creator, whereas now we offend God both as he is a Creator, and likewise as he is a Redeemer ; again, Lucifer committed but one sin of Pride, while we daily plunge our selves even in Enormous crimes.

Nay saint Bernard wishes a sinner would contract his malice within the limits of these inferior Creatures, but he becomes so audacious as to attack God in his divine Ar-

tributes, wishing he would take no cognizance, at least seem ignorant of his trespasses, by which he would deprive him of his wisdom: or that he would not punish them, and so ravish his Justice from him: lastly he wishes he could not chastise them, and so would render him not Omnipotent.

Besides, the contrariety of God to sin gives a great elucidation to its horror: for God is a supream Being, sin a nothing, God a source of al beauty, sin a sink of deformity: God is infinitely just, sin is injustice in the highest degree. O how dreadful a thing is sin, which carries a long with it so many

dismal reproaches ? But yet much more dreadful when it shall be brought to execution by Divine justice : for to be struck with a million of thunderbolts would appear but like a honydew if compared to the terrour of our angry God, when not restrained by his mercy. Let us then shelter ourselves from this desolation by the memory of our last end : let that Memorandum be awake in us and then we shall infallibly pay our God the just tribute of obedience to his holy laws , and consecrate all our endeavours to the promotion of his honor and Glory.

## THE PRAYER.

**O** God Omnipotent ; when I consider your sublimity, and my own abjection, I confes the outrages of sin appear so abominable that were not your mercy infinit, it would be ( methinks ) presumption even to ask pardon. What a horror to consider the consequence of sin, for could the effect of what it aims at succeed, it would destroy your Divine life, and in sequel be the destruction of Angels, Men, Heaven, Earth, and al created Beings, who subsist not but by the conserving hand of you their Creator : without whose influence they would in a moment resolve in to  
their

their former nothing. Wherefore in the first place I abjure al sin, even to its least exhalation ; next I promise never to let this unmercifull monster take birth from my unfortunate wil ; and in order to this , I beg that my unhappy soul may be cleans'd in the pretious bloud of the al-immaculate lamb ; and by that lotion receiuing a dye of innocence, every its motion for the future may contribute to your honour ; so that incessantly glorifying you upon earth , I may lay claim to your promises to be glorified by you in Heaven. Amen.





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SIN IS INJURIOUS

TO MAN HIMSELF.

MAN is framed to the
 likeness, born to the ser-
 vice, called to the knowledg
 and enjoyment of a Divinity.
 To fit him for that great de-
 signment God is pleased in
 Baptism to adorn his soul with
 grace, a supernatural quality
 which elevates him above him-
 self; and while we enjoy this
 pretious gift the son of God
 owns us for his brethren, and
 the fruits of his conquest: The
 Holy Ghost disdains not to
 make us his temple: nor the

Angels their companions : nay more , al created things here beneath acknowledg man's superiority , so that could this treasure be layd open and here secured to him, he would appear like an earthly God.

REFLEXION.

By sin we forfeit grace , a treasure inestimable.

THere is nothing ought more to amaze us then to consider our partiality in reference to the soul and body: with what sollicitude we attend to the one , and how unconcern'd in the state of the other: when the body is indispos'd,

what care to cal for a Physician, what obedience to his prescriptions : but vvhen the soul is vvounded with sin, how slow in seeking a remedy, and how heedles in avoiding the dangers of a relaps, thô never so home inculcated to us? When the body is in health tis nourisht vvith al delicacies of meat and drink; covered vvith pretious garments, and delighted vvith al sports and pastimes of vanity : vvhile the soul, if so happy as to be in the state of grace, for the most part is fed vvith a cold, tepid devotion, that only keeps her from starving: nay frequently staine vvith venial sins, vvhich take

off much of the souls lustre by grace. Nowv let us separate, and consider them apart.

As to the body, We know 'tis an earthly piece, a lump of corruption; sorted into several imperfections, insomuch that a main part of our contrivance in this life is taken up in disguising and concealing its defects, that we may be sociable, and entertain our selves in conversation without a blush: whence I wonder not at the saying of a holy person; that Lucifer by the excellence, of his nature was drawn into Pride and thence to his ruine, and to prevent this fatality, Almighty God gave man a bo-

dy, so to humble him, that while he beheld this object of misery, it might stifle in him Ambition or any other motion of selflove or high conceit: but alas God's design in this proves ineffectual; for the body is most cherisht, and by a strange sottishnes shaped into a meer Idol of vanity.

As to the soul, saint Bernard gives to a holy soul the title of heaven; her understanding (says he) is the sun: her purity and contempt of earthly things, the moon: her virtues, the stars: and her charity the Angel Motor that inspires activity into her actions. Saint Bridgit, who by Gods dispen-

sation was admitted unto a full view of a soul enricht with grace, assures us, that tis not possible for a mortal eye at once to behold her, and enjoy life, without a particular support from heaven : her beauty would be so ravishing as even to overwhelm a heart with joy : saint Austin styles grace the splendor of a soul, begetting holy love, and consequently a fear to stray from the path of vertue : by the assistance of her rays we arrive to the knowledg of God, our felicity, and the worlds vanity : by the light of this Divine habit, we discover the pleasures of the voluptuous, the wealth

of the avaricious, and the dazzling glory of the ambitious to be like to a cloud of smok dispersed into Air , and to contain nothing of solid satisfaction in them. It is grace that displays before us the horror of a mortal sin , and the danger of venial trespasses: it is grace which leads us as it were by the hand into the pleasing observance of God's holy commands : In fine, grace is a participation of the divine nature , and the day-break of that happines the accomplishment of which we expect in heaven : now what a horror to forfeit al these glorious advantages for a moments pleasures:

by one mortal sin we are rendered the vilest of Creatures, declared enemies to God, enslaved to sathan, odious in the sight of the Angels, and doom'd to suffer endless torments in hell. Wherefore it is more to be lamented than all the disgraces and hardships which can befall us in this world.

Our sweet Redeemer was pleased to honor us with the title of friend, making us the repository (by a friendly communication) of what he had received from his eternal father: now sin makes a breach in all the rules of friendship; it stains us with perfidiousness towards a God who loved us when

we were nothing, and gave us a
 a Being : to a friend, who
 continued this his love, when
 we were worse then nothing, that
 is, a sinner; daigning to afford
 his exciting grace to help us
 out of that gulf of perdition :
 lastly, by a mortal sin we play
 the ungrateful to a benefactor
 who continually showers down
 his blessings upon us , that
 should he withdraw his sustai-
 ning hand but one moment we
 must immediately dissolve into
 that nothing from whence we
 came.

To conclude, God has a
 mortal life which resides in our
 soul by grace, for the just are
 said to be the temple of God:

in whom he lives , and delights himself : now a sinner dethrones him from that sweet reign, placing the enemy of mankind in his room, and by a strange insolence rejects the grace he had received in the Sacraments, by which he became the servant and Child of heaven, and enslaves himself to the tyranny of an unpitying master who wil torment him for Eternity.

THE PRAYER.

HOW cruel O God is man unto himself , as to dislodg you his sovereign , who delights to be with the sons of men ; and bandy

*With mutinous passions in scorn of
 your authority, and in contempt of
 your highest favours : O what in-
 fatuation ? To believe and acknow-
 ledg the splendor, and beauty of
 your fair image within him, and
 yet prostitute this treasure to the
 deformity of sin, to set up an Idol
 of vanity, where once you did sweetly
 reign in Justice and innocence : but
 while I thus reproach my self, I
 behold the wonder of your exciting
 grace, that giving me a full view
 of my past follies, at the same time
 it gives me an earnest of your mer-
 cy; and is as it were the first step
 to my conversion. For from this
 reflection I abhor my disloyalty;
 I confes I have been treacherous
 to you and my self; and must give*

my self lost for ever, unless my tears, groans, and a heart wounded with sorrow and repentance may dispose me for the last stroak of your mercy, and obtain your gracious pardon, which I instantly beg of you the God of mercy. Amen.

THE PROEM.

DEath is the effect of sin, death likewise is the destruction of it: the power of God appears in mans creation, his wisdom in our re-creation: for Christ our Redeemer by the privation of his life restored us unto life; exchanging our temporal into a life eternal: let us admire his love in the my-

tery of the incarnation, his justice in his passion, and bounty in his last wil and testament in the institution of the sacred Eucharist; and after we have entertained our selves with the wonders of his goodnes let us spend our selves in the praise of his mercy.

ON THE MYSTERY
OF THE INCARNATION.

OUr unfortunate first Parent after his disobedience was not only exild from paradise, that delicious seat, and a stop put to his celestial inheritance, but also he involved the mass of mankind in

the punishment : so that his whole posterity groand under the penalty of this sad mortgage: besides his trespas caused so much weaknes in mans nature, such a cloud in his understanding , so much irresolution in his wil, so much disorder in his passions , insomuch that Saint Gregory notes our nature to be so changed as if we were unman'd and becom quite another thing : wherefore we are here to consider, that to restore us to our birthright, to relieve us in this sad plight and desolation, our sweet redeemer took flesh, and became man, in which action appears the testimony of a most rare and incomparable love.

REFLEXION.

Gods love to man.

IF we measure a gift by the dignity of the giver, none can be greater then the instrument of our Redemption; for tis a God that is our benefactor. If by the worth of the gift in it self, tis supremely valuable, for tis a God that is given: lastly, if by the good wil of the Donor, it admits no dispute, for tis a father that delivers up his son, nay his only son, and whom he infinitely loves, to be our ransom, and to redeem us from the servitude wherein the disobedience

dience of our first Parent had engaged us. This liberality of God seems as it were to blunt the pen of the winged Evangelist, saying; *God so loved the world as he gave unto it his only son.* He expresses with a wonder (*so*) as if he were at a stand, and for the rest left every one to admire what he could not express : and indeed it may well cast us into amazement, to behold a God infinit, Eternal, Independent, a sovereign good beatifying the blessed spirits in heaven, to dote upon miserable, ungrateful, and guilty man. That God should cherish the Angels who are immortal spirits, obedient in al things to

his laws and wil, who are in the enjoyment of their beatitude, yet infinitely below his greatnes, I say to careſs them is no great ſubject of wonder, but to have a kind regard, nay a ſeeming paſſion of love to man enſlaved to vice, unjuſt, perfidious, and conſcious of no Good. O! it ſurpaſſes al imagination: but our great and good God deſigning vve ſhould return to our perſecutors good for evil, was pleaſed to diſpoſe us for this ſevere command by the exhibition of his holy ſon as a pledg of Redemption; as alſo to take away the opprobry of his Creatures. For certainly a ſinner is the vileſt of Creatures,

he is a nothing , that is as to God and his salvation.

It is reported that S. Gregory never beheld the pourtraiture of Abraham with his arm lift up to sacrifice Isaac but it drew tears from his Eyes; and for us to behold the eternal father giving up his dear and only son into the merciles hands of the Jews , and not be sensible of it, is a prodigy beyond al the miracles Christ wrought in his life and passion. Look from the beginning of the world and you wil find a strange series of ingratitude in man : first Adam in a condition of compleat happines disobedient : Cain a homicide,

the rest of his descendents for the most part Idolaters : the Jews, nursed up as it were under his wings, stil rebellious and murmuring, yet stil with an admirable patience supported, nay protected even by miracles : however his goodness was not restrain'd, but issued forth his only son to be a Sacrifice for mans redemption. O! how is it possible to sum up al these obligations, and al these testimonies of his love and mercy, and not to becom a perpetual sacrifice of thanksgiving.

Saint Austin hints two very pathetick remarks on Gods munificence in the gift of his only

Son; First in that he has exhausted his divine stock; saying: *O God thô you are Omnipotent, yet you can give no more : thô you are most wise ; yet your wisdom can suggest nothing more to give : thô you are the magazine of al treasures, yet tis al emptyed in this profusion of our bounty :* the other remark is, that having made us this present, he can deny us nothing: vvhatssoever vve ask in his name, if to his honour and our good, vvil infallibly be accorded. Nay Saint Chrysostom goes yet further, in extolling the love of God the father, asserting many learned Divines to have declared their opinion that an Angel, or man,

might have been raised to such a degree of grace as to be rendered capable of restoring mankind. Now this supposition admitted, it transcends all imagination, and argues an excess of love, that his divine majesty should vwave the ministry of his Angels, or the deputation of some man excelling in grace, to engage his son in nature equal to himself, in the severe task of our Redemption: and still to encrease the wonder, this blessing was showered down upon us, when man had irritated his Creator to that height, that he repented to have made him, that is, were God capable of any error in his actions,

this exorbitancy in man might
lastly merit a repentance.

Since then our sweet Redeemer hath broke thron al these obstacles of our ingratitude, and by a stupendious submission taken our vile nature upon him, what return can we make? certainly we can grudg him nothing: for love consists in a mutual communication of honor, riches, knowledg, and whatever good we posses: now God hath play'd the prodigal with us let, us not be penurious to him: he is so reasonable as only to pretend to our heart: *San* (says he) *give me your heart*; but it must be a heart that is stript of al terrene

affection; he is a jealous God and wil have no rival; for in proportion as you love any creature, you have so much the less for him, unless it be in reference to him. There is no greater incentive to love then to prevent a lover; this part God hath acted with us, giving us a pledg of his own dear self; and that heart is very obdurate that wil make no return. O what longing sighs and groans issued from the breasts of those holy Patriarchs in the old law, that they might see the day break of Hierusalem's fair star; with what an awful respect and submission would they have received him: while we with a

kind of stupidity gather the fruit of his divine influence, without lifting up our eyes, or paying the least acknowledgment to him from whence they flow.

Saint Thomas says that the Benignity of God appears very great in that he daigns to communicate himself to the just by grace, but much more daigning to cōmunicate himself in the unity of his person to the human nature of **JESUS CHRIST.** the Prophet Osee ch. 11. foretold this mystery of love : saying, that God would link us to him by the chains of Adam, that is, God-man; for beholding the affections of men drawn by visible objects to that as ever to

be induced to Idolatry, his
 love prompted to render him-
 self visible by taking flesh, so
 to humour our inclinations,
 and become an object to which
 we may justly pay the honour
 of Latria, or Divine worship:
 thus love contrived that his
 sacred humanity should serve
 as a bait by which they might
 be allured to place their Ado-
 rations aright. In this mystery
 the seal is set to declare the
 worlds perfection; for by it we
 receive the remission of our sins,
 sanctifying grace and eternal
 glory: faith, exciting grace,
 and all the motions to our sal-
 vation are the effects of this
 sacred mystery. To conclude,

by it the honour of God is repaired , his service advanced , his creatures put into a vway of safety, and his enemies confounded. Let us therefore seriously weigh the benefits of Christ Incarnation , that from thence we may cherish our hopes to praise and glorify God for the exhibition of so inestimable a gift for the reparation of mankind.

THE PRAYER.

MR sweet Redeemer , who art a true sun of justice ; sent to make an attonement between your Eternal father and the perisht world : and in sequel

to clear for us a passage unto heaven : enlighten us with your beams of mercy , that by vertue of this reconciliation we may here be freed from all stains of sin , and in the other life be restored to our lost inheritance , which we shall ever owe to you O Incarnate Word, Amen.



VI. A MEDITATION ON THE PASSION.

THe August Mystery of Christs passion merits rather to be celebrated with silence and wonder then with tongue, or pen ; its sublimity surpasses the capacity of Angels, that God should dye for man :

a master for his slave, a Creator for his creature, and an innocent for the guilty: whence Saint Basil terms the Passion a perpetual mystery; because it reaches to the salvation of all men: so that this Sacrament of reconciliation will never cease while the world endures; therefore may justly be ascrib'd to the supream goodness of Gods special love in redeeming, not Angels, but men; not by another, but by himself: not by an unbloudy, but the bloudy death of the Cross. Saint Bonaventure makes it an argument of his special love to man, in that he gave up his life, not for Angels, but for man; and the

reason is given , because the Angels offended by the pravity of their wil having none to seduce them : but Adam was seduced by his wife , and she by the serpent ; whence appears that a sin is much aggravated when the occasion proceeds from a free choice , and not by any impuls of temptation from abroad : now , God might have pardon'd man , for being supream Lord it had been to none injurious , and as supream Legislator , he might have dispensed in his own law made against sin , and accepted for satisfaction of every one what he pleased : but since Gods pleasure was to wave al

(III)

these prerogatives, and neither to Employ Angels nor men, but to accomplish it in the person of his only son, this evidences that he would inculcate to us the great horror he entertains of sin; next it speaks a high character of his love; whence saint Basil styles the Passion a fountain of Gods love and mercy, and the source of al his other blessings to mankind.

REFLEXION.

Gods love accomplish'd.

S Eneca, that great Philosopher, could never be persuaded that God created the

world for mans sake; believing that an Angel was deputed to give a constant motion to the Celestial bodies: for he look'd upon Angels far surpassing men in excellence, and by consequence not so fit for his supreme wisdom to render them so serviceable to him. Now what judgment would he have passed upon our Christian belief, that teaches not only the world to be framed for our use, but also the Creator himself to become man, nay even to stoop to nothing, that man might be partaker of his Divine nature. Wherefore by how much the lower he threw himself, so much the more he ought to be

be raised in our affection : by how much the greater was our misery, so much the more our obligation is increased to our Saviour who freed us : and as his humiliation had no measure, our gratitude in like manner ought to go along in the same proportion.

The characters of Gods love are drawn out in such plain colours, that none can be so stupid as to plead ignorance; they are writ in bloud, and the Prophet in the person of Christ invites us to cast our eyes upon them, saying : al you that pass by the way make a stand, consider my present condition, and tel me if there

be any grief like unto mine. At the first entrance into this tragedy saint Paul (Hebr. 12.) tells us that Christ had a pleasant scene proposed unto him : that is, glory, or ignominy, a Regal appearance here an earth, or a servile condition, the redemption of mankind, either by way of cruelty or meeknes, was given to his election : for one groan from his heart, one tear from his pretious eye, or one drop of his bloud, had been sufficient to have redeemed millions of worlds, yet that he might convince us of his excessive love, and apply a plenitude of remedies, so to draw us to acts of gratitude,

and to pittie ourselves, he rather chose the Cross; he emptied his sacred veins, afflicted his soul with anguish and sadness ; permitted his body to be torn with stripes, insomuch that from al the parts of his body, the bloud streamd out; whence saint Bernard gives an ingenious remark : that albeit nature afforded him but two eyes , to be the conduits of tears , yet every pore of his body supplied his visive power, issuing forth a floud of crimson sweat , the most prodigious effect of anguish that ever happened in nature: to the end that with them, as with tears , he might expiate our faults, and

wash away the ordures of sin. Saint Chrysostom hints another reason of this his severity to himself, that he might hamper us in the Chains of his love; for there is nothing enslaves a person like to a good turn, or obliging act of friendship: wherefore Saint Bonaventure asserts, that nothing could have fastned the son of God to the Pillar but a link of Charity.

In the revelations of saint Bridgit, examined by order of the Council of Basil, and declared as issuing from a spirit Divine, to which we might rationally give credit, 'tis related, that the extremity of

Christs dolorous passion, rent
 his heart asunder, and open'd
 him a passage unto death; for
 certainly no expiring person
 was ever so destitute of com-
 fort as our sweet Redeemer.
 The reason is, his soul applying
 it self to the vision of the Divine
 essence, left the sensitive parts
 all desolate, hence was issued
 forth that dismal cry that God
 had forsaken him, for whereas
 a good person suffering in a
 just cause usually cheers him-
 self with the consideration of
 the brevity of his sufferings,
 the reward he expects in recom-
 pence, and the like, all this our
 Blessed Saviour waved, wholly
 intent on the contemplation of

the beatifick vision; so that the Prophet Esay had just reason to style him a man of grief, and dolours. 'Tis true twas in his power not to dye, wherefore he frankly gave up his life, and since he had undertaken the redemption of mankind, he would compleatly satisfie the Divine justice, suffering in his body to the utmost that rage could throw upon him, withdrawing likewise his intellectual faculties from lending any succour or spark of consolation to his sensitive parts, to that degree as even to shiver his heart in pieces, O what a prodigious testimony of love.

If every wound of Lazarus

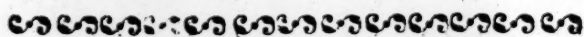
was as so many tongues to move
 the rich man to compassion,
 how loud ought Christs passion
 to sound in our ears, and Court
 us unto gratitude, to behold
 him naild to the Cross, so
 cruelly scourged that his whole
 body appear'd but as one wound,
 crownd with thorns, besmeard
 with spittle, laden with inju-
 ries, at last expiring on the
 Cross, and al this for our sake:
 O it is impossible seriously to
 consider al this, and our hearts
 not dissolue into love and com-
 passion. Our divine Redeemer
 seems to say that the utmost
 testimony of love is to lay
 down ones life for a friend, but
 methinks himself did much more

When he did it for his Enemies. Man sets not his affection upon any thing, unless it appear fair, wise, pleasant, pretious, or good: now God beheld nothing attractive in us; we were odious, vile, perfidious, and miserable; yet out of his goodnes he would purify and cleans us in his own bloud, he communicates favours to the ungrateful, to render them grateful; to his enemies, to make them friends, and to the distressed that he may render them happy, purchasing for them by his death immortality. How justly then may we conclude that the accomplishment of Gods love to man is evident and compleated in his Passion.

THE PRAYER.

MY sweet Redeemer, when I contemplate your suffering posture on the Cross, methinks I should become a statue with admiration and wonder: could my eyes distil a deluge of tears, and my heart with sorrow shiver into pieces, yet my compassion ought not there to rest: had I as many lives as there are grains of sand in the Ocean, and all consecrated to your honour, yet would they not reach to the least degree of compensation for that precious life of yours, of which one moment is more valuable than all the duration of Angels: what return then shall I make? At last I per-

*ceive tis love alone and gratitude
you expect ; wherefore I wish, my
dear Redeemer, that my heart were
a furnace heated with the flames of
seraphins , that I might be a per-
petual sacrifice of love , praise and
thanksgiving for your immense fa-
vours in the sacred mystery of your
passion. Amen.*



VII. ON THE INSTITUTION

OF THE EUCHARIST.

THis Epitome of wonders,
the sacred Eucharist, may
justly be termed an extension
of Christs love in his Passion :
for Christ offered up himself
once only a bloody sacrifice on
mount Calvary : but in the

Eucharist he is dayly offered up an unblondy sacrifice in millions of places, by which the memory of his passion is renew'd, and the fruit thereof applyd. In mans creation God breathd into him a life obnoxious unto death. In the Eucharist he communicates unto him a supernatural and immortal life. In mans creation, corporeal creatures wererankd under his subjection : in the Eucharist, the Creator of heaven and earth is given up to his command. In the incarnation Christ took upon him the form of a slave, in the Eucharist he shrowds himself under the species of bread and wine, which

being accidents are much more despicable then a human form, nay I dare say, it is not only an extension of love in his Passion, but even it exceeds it: for God more hates the guilt of sin then its punishment; consequently, to be crown'd with thorns, and nail'd to the Cross, was to him more supportable, then to be toucht by sacrilegious hands, applyed to a prophane mouth, and harboured in an impious breast: for the punishment of sin is not unworthy a God, yet the malice of it is opposit to his Divine nature.

REFLEXION.

Gods love and Passion perpetuated.

HOly writers affirm that al the torments Christ suffered in the whole scene of his Passion, were not so afflictive as the presence of Judas a domestick, an Apostle and a Traytor : it is a greater argument of perfection, to love an enemy then a friend : after death Gods faithful servants are beatified in heaven, his enemies doomed to perpetual punishment in hel : now tis not so in the Eucharist; he excludes none from his table, the innocent and guilty are admit-

ted to that heavenly banquet: a Judas partakes of his body together with his beloved Disciple; it is born to a thatch'd house as readily as to the Pallace of a King, to shew that in this institution of the Blessed Sacrament, Christs love to mankind is not only perpetuated, but compleated even to its utmost perfection.

It is usual at the parting of friends for the spirits to fall into commotion, and send forth most tender expressions: this evidences the great affection God had for man, that being to return to his Eternal father he contrived a means to be always with us, I say such a

contrivance that nothing but love could have found out : a contrivance that sets out his love even beyond our Creation, or redemption. O what a Prodigy of love , that while his enemies were framing a crown of thorns for him , at the same time he gave a Pledg to us for a crown of glory : that while they design'd him to the highest infamy , he opens them a way to supream felicity. This made the Evangelist inculcate that he loved us to the last : tis now at his departure that he musters up al his forces, to shew what love can do, and indeed tis such an effect as none but a love Divine could produce

and therefore of al the Sacraments it is styled the most perfect. Not only Gods inefable love, but likewise his Omnipotence shines in this August Sacrament : what a cluster of miracles are heaped one upon another ? first nature is turnd topsy turvy, bread and wine as it were annihilated, or reduced to nothing by words of the priest : the species or accidents deprived of their subject, yet subsisting like clouds in the air without any support, and serving as a vail to shrowd under them the glorious majesty of God, to be in millions of places at the same time : his entire body contracted within
the

the compas of a little host;
 and al these wonders to be ac-
 ted daily to the worlds end.
 Now the drift of al this is that
 the fruit of his Passion might
 always be applyd to us , and
 that the belief of his real pre-
 sence might strike an awful res-
 pect and reverence into us ;
 together with astonishment that
 his infinit majesty should stoop
 so low as to be united to the
 lovvest of created things, that
 is , the species of bread and
 vvine : another motive is, that
 since by the work of our Re-
 demption , Christ had only
 given life to our souls , by the
 purchase of grace , leaving our
 bodies under the penalties cau-

sed by Original sin, until their glorification at the general resurrection; wherefore to compensate this delay, and supply the prerogatives of Original justice, he was pleased to afford us his own glorious and immortal body, which raises us to a life of grace, a life eternal, over which death has no power: Christ asserts it, saying, He that eats of this bread shall live for ever. while he conversed among men he exhibited his sacred person to be the object of our sight and Adoration, but in the Eucharist he intimately unites himself unto us and makes us one with him: for as material nourishment

gives a certain temper to the body corresponding to its nature , so this bread of Angels (if worthily received , and with al due circumstances) imprints in the soul the very qualities , Inclinations , and vertues of JESUS CHRIST: nay enriches her with the merits of his holy Passion.

Now that we may arrive at this perfect union , let us do the utmost of our endeavours, divest and clear ourselves of every the least imperfection , that this heavenly Guest may find nothing to hinder the effects of this his divine presence, when we approach to that heavenly table.

Which effects are, first to transform and incorporate himself into us.

Secondly, to cast into our breast som sparks of that inflamd love, wherewith he designd to set the world on fire, declaring he came for that end, that it might consume al things here beneath.

Thirdly, to give me a previous relish of heavenly delights, and at the same time cause in me a distast of al that's visibible here on earth.

Lastly, to enlighten me with a certain knowledg of what the divine wil and pleasure is, and in sequel, to communicate his grace, and powerful aid

to put it in execution.

Now while I contemplate the wonders of a holy communion, I confes I am no less seized with admiration, that after so many communions, I am stil a stranger to these so admirable effects. But again I am satisfied when I reflect that tho by receiving this Blessed Sacrament, unstained with any mortal sin, I am enriched with the principal effect vvhich is sanctifying grace; yet as to the forementioned prodigious effects there are required many necessary conditions.

First, a great purity of conscience, together with a renouncing of al worldly vanity or interests.

Next, to have no adhesion, or complacence even in any venial sin.

Lastly, to be in perfect charity with the whole world. Let us therefore endeavour to fit ourselves with these requisites that we may be so happy as to be blessed in the participation of the divine liberality exhibited in the ever adorable Sacrament of the holy Eucharist.

T H E P R A Y E R.

O God, the fountain of all goodnes, who invites the thirsty unto streams which for ever wil allay their drough; and likewise courts the weary unto a repast,

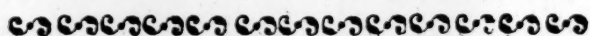
where they shal be nourished with the food of Angels: give me I beseech you a distast of al other refreshments, and fit me with a nuptial garment by which I may be rendered a pleasing guest to you the Bridegroom, who hast promised to Espouse such as are so vested, by an eternal Alliance in the bonds of love and mercy. Amen.

Remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin. Eccl. 7. 40.

THE PROEM.

THe final end of man, composed of soul and body, is distinguisht into that of a mortal life, which is death,

and into a life immortal which is felicity , or infelicity : that is , to be eternally happy , or eternally miserable ; for there in no mean , one of these extremes must infallibly be his lot or doom.



VIII. A MEDITATION

UPON DEATH.

WHen I consider death with the train of corruption , stench, and a hideous deformity which attends and follows it , I confess it strikes me into horror and admiration. First what a horror to consider a body , kept with al nicety, pre-

served with al rarities, no cost, art , or industry wanting to render it fresh, and lively, in a moment to becom a lump, liveles, ugly , noisom, and after a while made a prey to worms: witnes the fair Elizabeth, Empres to Charles the fifth, the wonder of beauty in her time, soon after death became so deform'd , and such a stench issued from her, as it occasion'd the Duke of Gandia, then present, to bid adieu to al the worlds vanities , and shrovvd himself within the wals of a holy Cloister.



R E F L E X I O N.

How beneficial the thoughts of Death.

A H! did we as oft behold ourselves in a deaths head (which wil be one day the true image of us) as now we do in a glasse, so many precious hours would not be thrown away in adjusting a lock of hair, a patch, or knot of riband, so much art and so many inventions would not be contrived, to set out and preserve a beauty, that with every little indisposition, or male-contented humour is altered and impaired; nay liable to a thousand accidents for its total ruine. The same consideration

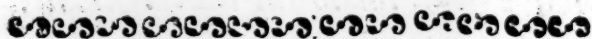
would also teach men to change their adorations into a blush, and reserve their passions for a beauty unfading: that beauty (says Saint Austin) alone merits that name, which as it is fair and lovely, continually remains so: a beauty that knows no setting sun, but is always vested with a meridian glory. Let us therefore learn of the Royal Prophet this prudent lesson, to remember our last end, to remember we must dye, and be resolved into dust. If our days pass away like a shadow, no less does beauty like a flower; fair in the morning, and at night drooping in its withered leaves. Besides if we re-

fleet, that the most charming beauty hath oft proved very fatal both to the owner and looker on, this reflection ought to check any appetite or desire of appearing so accomplish'd; especially since it may contribute both to their own and others ruine. In a word, remember, that the glory, pomp, riches, and esteem'd happiness of this world, descend not with us to the grave, all we bear from hence is our good and bad deeds.

THE PRAYER.

O God, who in the noble structure of man hast allotted

him a soul immortal that resembles your Divine Being, with power to command his interior and sensitive part, enlighten me to know the dignity of my spiritual substance, and in conformity to what you have ordained, grant that I may render this earthly piece of mine, that is my body, instrumental to acts of Piety, and what I owe to you my Creator; that since I am intrusted with it to make it happy for eternity, I may keep it in subjection, treat it as my slave, absolutely depending on me, and never acquiesce to its fawning and enchanting allurements, lest I contribute to the eternal ruine of both. Amen.



VIII. THE SECOND MEDITATION

O F D E A T H.

What a horror to consider that the sacred bonds of marriage, the strictest ties of nature and friendship, all dissolved in death ; no chains of Alliance , or worldly interest of proof against his destructive hands : no President having yet been found to flatter us with the least hopes of escaping his icy paws, no condition of eminent dignity, neither youth, beauty, eloquence, or treasures could ever yet corrupt, or blunt his unmerci-

ful ſithe which mows down
al before him.

REFLEXION.

The certainty of death.

SINCE then the decree of death is paſt, and is more inviolable then that of the Medes and Perſians : let us at leaſt ſolace ourſelves with this, that death in its ſelf is indifferent ; to thoſe that dye in grace it is good , to thoſe that die in ſin it is evil : where fore you ſee it is in our power to render that thing ſo terrible quite of another nature ; as the Pſalmiſt ſays : the death of ſaints is pretious in the ſight of God.

THE PRAYER.

O God in whose hands are lodg'd
the Keys of life and death,
and who hast put me into this world
(moved thereunto by your goodnes)
without any desert, or knowledg of
mine: grant that whilst I wander
in this foreign Region far from
my home, I may learn and punc-
tually observe a lesson, short, but
comprehensive, issuing from your
own blessed mouth, which is; To
love you above al things, and
my neighbour as my self. The per-
formance of the one wil carry me
quietly to my grave, freeing me from
any act of injustice or satisfaction
to render at my death: while the
other

other wil cast me into languishments
 after you the object of my love, stil
 awaiting that sleep which may con-
 vey me throu the ecclips of death,
 into the splendor of a life eternal,
 and into the accomplishment of al
 my hopes and desires. Amen.

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### THE THIRD MEDITATION

OF DEATH.

**W**Hat a horror to be-  
 hold a person who  
 has placed his felicity in the  
 goods of this world, forced to  
 surrender up al at the approach  
 of death, and this perhaps at  
 a time when little prepared for  
 acts of lustice; or when in the

K

height of contentment in possession of som pleasing object; no tears or terrours, no groans or importunities can obtain any respit; when he summons, we must go; for death has no eyes to be dazled at the splendor and majesty of great ones; nor ears to be moved with the howlings of the miserable: Ah what pleasure then can it be to enjoy that which in a moment may be snatch'd from us, or we from it. The day of our Lord which is death steals upon us like a thief in the night: besides we are wholly ignorant both of the manner, and what kind of death shal conclude our life, as al-



so of the place , or time.

# REFLEXION.

*Thoughts of death prevent illusions.*

**W**Hilest in health we are cheated by disguises , and false appearances of things, but at the lightning of death every thing is represented in its right proportion. A dying person wil tel you that al his past sensual delights appear to him like a dream , and he wishes they had been so : for then he should awake with joy to sleep again in death , with hopes of enjoying pure and lasting pleasures : he wil tel you that honour , greatness and esteem of men are

a meer shadow, a puff of wind, or a little smoke, which like a vapour vanish at the Evening of our life: he wil tel you that his inordinate appetite in the purchase of a fortune, his continual fears to be disturbed in the possession, and his ambition to make a figure in the world, have diverted him from the pursuit of never perishing treasures, which ought to have been the sum of his endeavours here upon earth. Learn therefore in time this lesson issuing from an expiring breath, which is of weight because esteemd most sincere. For at last it wil be too late to be undeceived: look I say betimes into the glass

of death, you may there learn both to live and dye: for death not only teaches, but forewarns and powerfully persuades.

## THE PRAYER.

**I** Adore your providence, my God, that to the short period of this our life, you have added a draught of gal to be mingled with the sweets of this world; that since really we are pilgrims, we ought not to fix our contentment in any pleasing object here, but stil advance on our way towards the mansion of our eternal repose: May I then O my God be so happy as to make use of those creatures your liberal hands

have bestow'd, according to the tenour of their Grant, which is to be aiding to me in works of your service: give me an aversion for riches, unless I use them so as to encrease my treasures in heaven; let me contemn honour and greatnes, if in the least they divert me from obedience to your laws: In a word, let me set a value upon every thing in proportion as it may contribute to your honour and glory, and to the security of my souls eternal interest. Amen.



## THE FOURTH MEDITATION

### OF DEATH.

**W**Hat a horror to consider the separation, and sad

parting of soul and body, after  
 a long union and friendship,  
 imprinted by God and nature  
 in them: the one to be resolu'd  
 into dust, vvhilst the other is  
 hurried to a Tribunal before  
 an impartial Iudg, there to  
 answer for every idle vvord  
 or thought: and al-uncertain  
 of her doom, vvwhether to be  
 rejoynd in a state of happines  
 or misery, and this for no less  
 than Eternity.

# REFLECTION.

*Thoughts of death the best armour  
 against the day of judgment.*

**A** Christian taught by faith  
 that there is a judgment

to ensue upon the separation of soul and body , ought not to live as if he vvere immortal, or as if he had no account to render at the latter day, but carefully to provide against the time of that dreadful Assise, where vvil be scan'd to the ful and vvith the severest scrutiny al our good and bad actions, in order to an eternal reward or punishment: and this trial appears the more terrible in that al our trespasses directly strike against the honour of him vvho is to be our Iudg. For Christ having pay'd our ransom by the effusion of his precious bloud , has this prerogative decreed him to be both

Judg and Parry. O vvhat a  
 confusion for a sinner to be-  
 hold his offended Iudg, vvho  
 vvvas once to him a patient God,  
 and vvhom then he contemnd,  
 disobeying his just lavvs : vvho  
 vvvas once to him a loving God,  
 and vvhom then he slighted,  
 more valuing a petty interest  
 of this vvorld, or som foul  
 momentary pleasure, beyond  
 al the endearments and testi-  
 monies of his real affection.  
 What a confusion to hear a  
 particular list given in and pu-  
 blish'd, of al those graces and  
 favours he had received from  
 the liberal hands of his once  
 indulgent father, and novv  
 hissovereign Iudg; as also a clear

recital made of al his ungrateful returns, in sequel, this a merciful lamb, then become a Lion, vvill let loose al the reserve of his anger to fall upon his guilty head. The first effect vvill be to brand him vvith the black stamp of the highest ingratitude, vvhich mark of eternal shame, one would think, to a generous soul would be a sufficient punishment, vvithout the addition of those horrid torments ordaind by Divine justice to be inflicted on perisht souls. Now to dispose ourselves for a happy issue in this grand proces the best expedient is to retain a constant memory of death; for



death not only minds us that it is a privation of life, an upshot to al our pleasures here, the loss of al our goods and possessions, in a word a cashiering of al our earthly designs, but it also lays open before us our entrance into another life, and the hazardous gulf we are to pass throu ere we com to be happy: the way then to secure our happiness is frequently to lodg our thoughts in a sepulcher, and this as is at hand, and rapping at our door. For such persons (says Saint Austin) wil be like stars, not seen in the day of this life, but glitter and sparkle in the night of Death.

## THE PRAYER.

**M**Y God, there is nothing more dreadful then your abused love converted into hatred, and to a love injured usually succeeds the like measure of punishment; what terrour then, my God, wilt invade a sinner, at the latter day when at the mysteries of divine love to mankind shal be lay'd open: the sacred wounds my Redeemer receiv'd upon our score, and which then shal outstrip the sun in brightness, wil sufficiently evidence your excessive love, and our extream ingratitude. Those sacred scars I say, wil also justify your fury issuing from an irritated love,

Whilst our apparent guiltines wil  
 find no plea, no retreat to shelter  
 it self from your consuming anger:  
 O my God, grant that I may in  
 time foresee this helples desolation,  
 and prepare against it; the time of  
 this life is the time wherein the  
 flouds of your mercy are drawn up;  
 O let me be so happy as now to  
 bath myself in those purifying streams;  
 and may I by acts of love and re-  
 pentance, purchase here a quiet sub-  
 mission to death, and at the ensuing  
 judgment a joyful invitation to take  
 my place at your right hand. Amen.

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THE FIFTH MEDITATION

OF DEATH.

Consider the goodnes of
 God that notwithstanding

ding man would not be forewarn'd of Death , yet he has ordain'd in his wisdom to make it a warning piece against sin : to this end he decreed that the hour of its approach should be wholly uncertain , and lye hid unto us ; by that means to strike us into a fear of surprisal , and render us very wary in the conduct of our life , lest being snapt unawares , the balance of our good actions may prove to light at the grand accounting day. Wherefore Christ taught us in our Pater noster to supplicate for our daily bread , because he never promis'd us a to morrow. Besides , death look

upon at a great distance squares
not our life to any Rule
of prudence; it neither diverts
from what is evil, nor allures
to what is good: but to those
who make it the subject of
their daily meditation and dai-
ly expectation, its arrival can
do no harm.

REFLEXION.

*Thoughts of death prevent sur-
prisals.*

IN the first place such per-
sons will have no remorse of
conscience, having made their
life a preparation to death:
next, they will have no reluc-
tance to quit their possessions

here, because they look'd upon them only as goods intrusted, or lent, and to be restored at the owners demand: hence they having not set their hearts upon them, chearfully they make a surrender, and with smiles approach to grim death; carried on with hopes to make it a passage to the enjoyment of Paradise, the sweet air of eternal mansion seeming already to affect their nostrils, and prompt them to invite this pale ferry-man to waft them over; for tho the glory of the world descend not with sinners, yet the glory of vertue descends with the lust.

The

THE PRAYER.

O God who hast given man a restless appetite after his sovereign good, and hast decreed that death must usher, him to this his happiness, there being nothing here beneath to quiet his unsatisfied desires; we bless your immense goodness in rendring our abode in this vale of tears so fleeting, as also the hour of our last sleep so uncertain, that we may neither be too long detain'd from the enjoyment of our glorious final end, nor unprepared at that summons which shal call us from the tumultuous Ocean of this world unto the haven of eternal rest, which throu your mercy we hope the constant thoughts of death may secure us. Amen.

FURTHER REFLEXIONS

UPON DEATH.

AFTER these dismal considerations, I am likewise cast into wonder and amazement; in that we sport, and play, caress and recreate ourselves, even when we are dying, and perceive it not. Gods threatening words to Adam make it evident, saying, *on the very day he eat of the forbidden fruit, he should dye.* Now Adam lived many years after: the meaning therefore is, at the very moment of his transgression he should begin to dye; hence Saint Gregory terms our life a lingring death, for the first motion of our life is likewise a motion

unto death, every succeeding hour, month, or year, is the death of the former never again to return: so that we pass (as it were) from one grave to another, til at last we com to our winding-sheet, which only is called death, because the last change, or vicissitude of life, tho a great part of us were dead before, albeit we were not sensible of it, so that in reality we are a living sepulcher to ourselves. How justly then may our life be term'd death, since it is in a perpetual motion, and chang, never fix'd by any stability, but always in a rapid cours hurried on towards its end. Now at the first glance of mans sad condition under the fatality of

death , I confels my repining thoughts are alarm'd : but no sooner I reflect on the sweet proceeding of our Creator in this particular , when al murmuring is changed into admiring his incomparable goodnes. For God creating our first Parent placed him in the most delicious climate of the habitable world , adorn'd him with original justice , which made a fine harmony throu out the whole frame of man : his inferior part , and sensitive appetite , perfectly obedient , and submissive to his reason : no storms of passions or irregular motions prompting him to evil ; now that he might not fal from this happiness , God was pleas'd to terri-

fy him with the consequence of his transgression, which should be death, as a punishment more affrighting than that of hel, for death is obvious to our reason and sense: reason tels us that a compound of several elements naturally resolves into those principles whereof it is composed: our senses likewise daily behold the havock made in mankind by death: now that there is a hel Faith only gives us the knowledg; and how unactive this vertue is in any vehement temptation we need go no further to convince us then our own sad experience; hence tis evident death springs from sin, for had there been no disobedience,

there had been no death, Adam's sottish incredulity not believing he should dye, drew death upon his own head, and al his posterity. Next, tis clear, the wisdom of God (to our apprehension) could not contrive a greater Bugbear then the terror of death avoid sin, nor consequently a more powerfull expedient to secure immortality to us.

My God I adore your inef-
fable goodnes that vvas pleas'd
to put immortality into our
hands vvhich our first parent
might easily have grasp'd, and
secur'd to himself and posterity.

I adore no less your mercy, that
when we had forfeited this pre-
gious gift of immortality, you

did not at the same time de-
 prive us of your dear self, as our
 final end, and sovereign good,
 tho' throu' our own fault we
 were to pass to it by death;
 nay more, to render the pur-
 chase of our final end less hazar-
 dous, was pleas'd to ordain the
 time and hour of our death to
 be wholly uncertain, lest sin-
 ners might persevere in their wi-
 ckednes with hopes of som res-
 pit for repentance; or the just
 slacken their devotions, reser-
 ving the more fervent acts of
 vertue towards the end of their
 life. God (says S. Austin) wrapt
 up in secret the last day of our
 life, that we should observe
 every day as if it were our last.
 Let us keep close to this rule;

then death (which is now so terrible) wil put an end to our pilgrimage here , be the upshot of our misery , a return from our banishment , and an entrance into our eternal happines.

Wherefore my God from this present I submit to the sentence of mortality you have pronounc'd against me , and this I do , not by constraint , or to obey the necessity of nature , but meerly in that it is a decree of your Divine wil , to which I comform my self : as also to that manner of death you have determin'd as to my particular , and to it's circumstances without any exception.

From this present I resign my self to that last sicknes which shal give a period to my life , unpro-

fitably trifled away ; and I offer up my agony in union of those dolorous pangs my dear Redeemer sustained upon the Cross.

I represent to my self the horror my disfigured body may give to others which I accept of as a punishment for my selflove and esteem of others. I also resign to be cast into oblivion after my death , as a just return , for having been so little mindful of you my God during my wretched life.

Lastly, I submit to my bodies corruption in my grave , in expiation of al my pamperings, and inordinate pleasing of my appetite : and likewise in satisfaction for that large score I ow to your Divine Majesty for my

coldnes and tepidity in your service.

THE PROEM.

AFTER this great work of our Redemption, by whose vertue the gates of geaven are layd open, let us convert our thoughts and desires towards that celestial abode; where no more the ugly shape of sin, nor terrours of death shal affright: where no more the fear of our own frailties shal keep us in an awful trembling, being confirmd in grace: and where all our toilsom labours upon the score of vertue wil be converted into eternal rest: wherefore this shal be the subject of our next meditation and the conclusion

of al : for having brought you thither , no more remains but to love and praise for eternity.

IX. THE DIGNITY OF MANS'S FINAL END.

WHen God created al things of nothing he alone was existent , what then could he have in his eye but him self to be the final end of al his vvorks? vvherefore to the inferior Creatures in this vvorld he is their final end , but to Angels and Men vvho are endued vvith reason , he is not only their final end , but also their objective Beatitude. Hence appears the excellence of human nature vvhich is equally rank'd vvith Angels : for the value of every

being is derived from the end to vvhich it is designed : nowv the end of man being the same vvith that of the blessed spirits, consequently he is not inferior to them in the high prerogative of his Being. That he is our final end , Saint Austin sweetly insinuates, saying: *My God, should you give me al you have made, yet vvithout your self they would not reach to quiet my inclination which cannot be centered but in you alone.* And that he is our objective beatitude, or sovereign good, this assurance Almighty God imparted to Abraham, declaring, *that he himself would be our too great reward.* That is too great for our merit , tho not for his love.

REFLEXION.

Means to attain unto our finaleud.

T Here is nothing more delightful then to con-temple God's method in the framing, and Compleating man from his creation to his consummation. First he was pleased to draw him out of nothing, and give him à simple natural Being, yet a Being so far surpassing in excellence al other Creatures of this inferiour world as it justly prefigured some rare design of this great Artift.

Next, Almighty God beholding this his work immediately depraved by sin, and throu man's own fault ungrateful to him that made him, yet he would not let him perish, but as at first he

had dragd him from nothing by his pure goodness , so likewise he would reserve him by a greater testimony of his goodness from the evil Being of sin; which is worse then nothing as Christ declared of his treacherous Apostle, *it were better he had never been.* And to effect this he designed , that wonder of love, and mercy in the mystery of our Redemption.

Lastly our great , and good God whose bountyes are beyond measure and incomprehensible was so carryed on by his paternal affection to man , as his gift of natural Being by Creation , and that of grace by Redemption did not fill up the extent of his liberality , for he be-

held them intermingled which the miseries of this mortal life, wherefore he daignd to superad the excellent Being of glory, by the communication of his divine essence by an ardent love, a perpetual joy, and by a profusion of al accessaries which attend so sublime, and supereminent a state of blis.

Now to have the charming sweetnes of our final end decipherd to us, and yet remain ignorant of the means by which we may, arrive unto it, would affoord us very little satisfaction, know therefore we are to cut out our way to this blessed state by vertuous, and pious actions; t'is true God might have given it without exacting any thing

at our hands, but the order of his Providence hath decreed, that with labour and pain we should attain to our utmost perfection : nor ought we to repine that so great a good should cost us a little sweat, and hardship, especially if we reflect how unweariedly we toyl our selves in the pursuit of fading treasures besides, God assists us with his grace, and supernatural ayds, which joynd whith the knotty, combats a virtuous man sustains do proportion his good works to the greatness of Beatitude, do purify, and prepare him for that sublime state. Whence Philo terms Industry the supereminent treasure of man and in sequel adds that
no.

nothing great or generous is to be expected from a person who gives himself to ease and pleasure. For God did not Create man, and enrich him with so many different habits, and facultyes, that he should keep his arms across and do nothing; man's full repose is not like that of a stone which arriv'd at its center is unmoved, and without action: but as here we are to be industrious, so in the term a soul is not reputed happy but when actually in the enjoyment of God, tasting his sweetness, and intimately uniting her self to his essence, from whence, as from a breast she sucks a deliciousness that sur-
M

passes all imagination wherefore to dispose man for the purchase of this his utmost perfection.

He hath an appetite concreated vwith him , by vvhich he naturally loves God, and moves towards him as to his Center ; besides this motion inserted in his nature , he is endued vwith another appetite , vvhich is a liberty granted to act vwithout any constraint ; so that 'tis in his power to pursue this or that object at his choice , and 'tis from the management of this appetite , or free vvil , he becomes happy or miserable. Nowv this noble faculty is vvel directed vwhen it moves , and is united to the vvil of God ac-

according to his precept: for then God by his power enables him to act; by his wisdom regulates his actions; and by his goodness applies them to himself as their final end. Then this free will happily addressed renders mans vocation secure, by flight from sin and the practice of vertue.

But again, when this free will is ill addressed by deviating from Gods commands, acting both against reason and obedience; God immediately stops his activity, lends him no more his directing beams, for his goodness cannot cooperate to what is evil; hence unfortunate man quitting his all guiding spirit, takes the rice of all his

motions from his passions, from the instigations of the Devil, and from the attractive baits of the world, which hurry him on to the pursuit of unlaſſeful pleasures and ſatisfactions; and for a while drencht in theſe, he hugs himſelf in the enjoyment, as if they were his final end.

Thus it appears how inexcusable we are if we miſs of our glorious final end, ſince it depends upon ourſelves: nay to deviate from it we muſt even uſe violence, and check our natural inclination; we muſt become our own enemy, ungrateful to our Creator, thwart our reaſon, forfeit al our glorious pretentions, and break throu al theſe

chains to undo ourselves. O what infatuation ? That man who is Lord of the univers, enriched, with reason, adorn'd with beauty, even to perfection, that he might be as it were a miracle to the rest of creatures here beneath, should be thrown down from all these prerogatives, quit a sovereign good to become a slave to unruly passions, rais'd in him by sin.

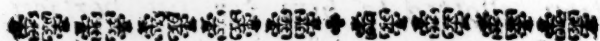
Now the best preservative in this our tottering condition is, never to do any thing rashly, but first consider whether it conduces to our supernatural and blessed end; if so, then let our free wil embrace it; if otherwise, let the same noble faculty

reject it , as a thing unlawful, and unworthy our immortal Being. So that steering our actions by the impuls of our free wil joynd with grace, which is never denied to the humble suppliant , we may attain to our beatitude with a ful satisfaction; for doubtles when we shal arrive at that state of Bliss , the reflection that we have don something in som little measure by the concurrence of our free wil in order to its acquisition , wil prove no smal ingredient to our contentment.

THE PRAYER.

O God, who hast given to man
a heart more capacious than

the whole world, and in his Creation allotted to him for his portion celestial glory, let me not perish by a stupid ignorance of what I am and may be: but enable me with your grace always to correspond with the greatness of my birth-right; and never yield to the childish baits of flesh and blood, so far as to blemish my pretensions, or in the least hazard my eternal inheritance. Enlighten me to distinguish between eternal and temporal interests: that I may not pursue a shadow of happiness, and forfeit the substance of a real felicity, which is not found but in you my God by obeying your holy commands, for to their exact performance is annexed the promise of a life eternally happy. Amen.



X. A MEDITATION

ON MAN'S BEATITUDE.

That object which is capable to beatifie man ought to contain twithin it self al perfections , and universally whatever is good : for if deficient in the least , that defect will render a soul unsatisfied. Besides , it must communicate this plenitude in such manner as not to be exposed to any shadow of danger that it may be ravisht from her , for the

want of this security will keep her always in suspense, and give a check to her compleat happiness: hence we may conclude, that no created object having a vertue without limit or change, consequently it belongs only to God who is infinit, and that he alone can lay the heart of man at rest, and glut al his desires.

R E F L E X I O N.

*In Beatitude al our desires are
accomplish't.*

SAINT Austin saysthat there is a mutual enterchange between God and the blessed; God does possess the blessed as

his peculiar and appropriated good: the blessed God, as their proper inheritance; and together with him they possess all other things: for earthly indowments are separate, power is not beauty, beauty is not knowledg, and the like; but in heaven you have whatever is great, or good, or pleasant, that can enter into mans imagination, and altogether at once without succession: for in eternity there is no past nor future, all is wrapt up in the present: if one sense here be recreated, and we intent upon it, the other senses have no satisfaction from their pleasing objects (tho applied unto them) for want of

attention; but 'tis not so in heaven, our beatitude consists in the operation of the understanding, which is of a greater Capacity then the Organs of our senses, and consequently can deliciate it self in a thousand different objects at the same time, and so intimately, that as iron red hot seems to divest it self of its own form to put on that of fire; so God wil penetrate al the faculties of our soul as if she had lost her own Being, and becom one with him, so that our hearts wil be at rest; Conformably to which S. Austin says, God wil be the accomplishment of al our desires, Eternally to be seen, and unwea-

riedly to be loved. Eternally to be seen, because by a clear vision the blessed wil be inseparably united unto God as their center, and sovereign good, which once attaind, they have nothing more to wish or desire : Vnweariedly to be loved, because he is an Ocean of delights, an inexhausted spring of perfections, stil creating a fresh appetite to behold and love him. Saint Gregory says the Angels behold God and desire to behold him, they thirst to behold him, evenwhile they behold him: that is, their appetit is never cloy'd, and their desires never slacken'd, nor abated; both satiety and desire being

joynd together. So that celestial beatitude admits nothing of relenting, but perfectly quiets al our pretentions. Our soul (says the Royal Prophet) which is as it were an Abyss of infinit capacity, cals and pants after God who is an Abyss of infinit greatnes, and who alone can replenish al her desires.

There are three propertyes attend Beatitude, the which settle a Soul alwayes in a perfect calm, and tranquillity. One is that she is impeccable, secure from the least deviation or sinful trespass. This innocence springs from the condition of Beatitude incompatible with sin: for a soul that hath a cleer vision of

God, beholds him so beautiful, so majestuous, so accomplishd in al perfection, that she would not hazard the loss for millions of worlds, besides to this vision is alwayes joynd an ardent affection, and if S. Paul amidst the miseries of this life defyed al Beings whatsoever to separate him from the charity of JESUS CHRIST, much more in the state of Glory (which is free from al contest) may the blessed defy any to separate them from God; and tho' our wil in heaven retain the possession of her liberty, or free choice, yet t'is there confined to what is good, and by consequence secures a soul from the least fear of sin, and

settles her in a perfect peace and tranquillity.

The next property of Beatitude is, that a soul is embellishd with a beauty ineffable : for if a glorified body outstrips the Sun in splendour, much more wil the soul be illustrated by the light of glory, as also by her own glory consummated, vvhich vvil beautify her even to admiration, and immediately dispose her to contemplate, and unite herself to the infinit beautyes of her Creatour : for if grace here in this our pilgrimage irradiates a soul to that degree as her splendour is insupportable to a mortal eye, by the testimony of S. Bridget in her reve-

lations ; doubtless the light of glory vvhich is the perfection of grace vvill much add to her lustre. If then vve covet so much to have our bodys here adorn'd, if here vve are so passionat after a beauty that resembles a shadowv, more fleeting then the clouds, tarnisht vvith every little feaver and totally ruind by time, ah vvhy do vve not rather pant after Beatitude, vvwhose charms are alvvaies vigourous, amiable, and renders us in al circumstances compleatly happy.

The third property is that its joyes wil be eternal this our happy end, wil be without end: for it consists in the vision, and love of God, which two operations

tions wil never cease ; for God never withdrawes his gifts from Creatures unless upon something of demerit on their side , now as to this they are secured being raised above the activity of any natural Agent which may any wayes cause a prejudice to them. Lastly the soul wil not deprive herself of this her happiness , for she beholds nothing in God that is not most perfect, and ravishing , for in him she enjoyes a ful repose , abundance of satisfaction , and a delicious assurance of a glorious life for eternity.

In the primitive times Christians were usually styled disciples of heaven , and were so

much abstracted from worldly
interest as they held it a dis-
paradgment to their divine ma-
ster (who had read to them
sublime maximes of Eternal fe-
licity) not to be eager in the
pursuit of celestial glory. Nay
he that appeared to covet the
hungry Elements of this world,
so Saint Paul terms honor,
wealth, and sensual pleasures,
they proclaimed an ingrate, that
had forgot the price of his Re-
demption : for Christ first open'd
to us a passage unto heaven :
next he purchased grace by
which we are enabled to its ac-
quisition. Lastly he taught us
in our Pater noster daily to pe-
tition for that rich inheritance,

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saying, *thy Kingdom com* : yet
alas man attends so little to the-
se gracious blessings, at it occa-
sioned Saint Austin to lament
with a kind of admiration, that
man kind for the most part
should rather seek his felicity
in a world deficient then in a
God al-sufficient.

There is no rational Agent
that having propos'd to him
self an end, does not likewise
pitch upon som means to arrive
to this end. And these means
ought also to have som propor-
tion to the end. Now we a'm
at Beatitude which is to Charm
and allay al our desires : the
means to compas this should
be fitted with som quality which

tends and leans towards quiet;
and certainly a vertuous and
holy life does most contribute
to this end. For the beatitude
of Saints is a sacred repose, and
delicious banquet, a joy and un-
disturbed peace. So the just
here upon earth are replenish'd
with grace, which is the seed
of glory, and this occasions
unto them a perfect tranquillity
of mind: and their passions
being reduced to a wondrous
calm, they are deliciated with
a perpetual feast: every motion
of their heart in pursuit of one
and the same object, which
being infinit, answers to all
their longings. Nay we read
of holy persons who have been

overwhelmd vvith such a torrent of delights, that had they not been moderated, they must needs have made a passage unto death. Hence tis evident that a life of sanctity is a resemblance that approaches the neereſt to a ſtate of bliſs, and may juſtly be term'd the beatitude of this mortal life.

THE PRAYER.

O God, before whose glorious throne, the ſeraphims and al the bleſſed in heaven bow down their flaming heads; adoring your greatnes, admiring your divine attributes, and raviſht vvith eternal affections, do inceſſantly chant forth

your praise : Grant to us your poor
servants here under tryal that we
may imitate in som little measure
your celestial Chorists , paying our
awful respects , by acts of adora-
tion : Our obedience, by a perfect
observance of your holy laws : Our
love , by a pure sacrifice of al we are
and have, to your sacred wil and
pleasure : And as the sun passes over
ordure without infecting its Rays ;
may we in like manner pass throu
the sordid baits of this world until
we arrive at thee our ô Center and se-
uereign good , after which al motions
and pretensions wil end in eternal
repose. Amen.





THAT BEATITUDE

ADMITS NO GRIEF OR SADNES.

O What comfort to consider beatitude, which S. Austin defines in few words, a joy of truth, because God is the source of al verities: and in him we shal behold the wonders of our faith unvail'd: those divine mysteries which surpass al imagination wil be drawn out of obscurity into light, and strangely regale our understanding, causing ineffable joy within us; as to contemplate the divine productions, how the Son is coeternal

and consubstantial with the father, and how both by a mutual love breath forth the Holy Ghost, in all things equal to the father and the Son: to have the mystery of the holy Eucharist unfolded to us, how God is pleas'd to contract himself with in the compass of a small host and to be grasp'd by our unworthy hands. To contemplate the wonders of his providence in the government of this world, how his divine wisdom has so managed the different events of human actions as to make of them a harmony of his glory: nay out of the clashing, and thwarting malice of men, to draw forth good. This clear
pro-

prospect wil ravish the blessed, for as the sun enlightens a body by the instrument of the eyes, so God recreates and beati-
fies a soul by the understanding fortified with the light of glory: now to this joy which springs from the understanding succeeds a joy in the wil: and by how much the knowledg of a taking object is perfect, in proportion the wil embraces and loves it; for the understanding and wil are conducts by which joy is conveyd unto us; nay indeed the very flower, and fruit of joy. Hence as the blessed by the understanding contemplate the Divine Essence, face to face, without

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any interpos'd vail , so the wil
Enflam'd from this prospect uni-
tes it self by a love ineffable
unto God the fountain of al
good. Thus the soul by these
two faculties united to the
most sovereign ad perfect object
wil be plung'd in an Ocean of
delights , and like a sponge be
replenish'd on al sides With
joy and exultation.

REFLEXION.

No true joy upon Earth.

S Aint Austin ruminating u-
pon the joy of the blessed
cried out , O joy above al joy
without which there is no joy;
nay he pursues his transport

saying, that to posses this joy for the space of one day, is more to be valued then the most exquisit pleasure of this world for innumerable years : but whilst our thoughts are entertained with reflections on the joys of heaven, methinks tis a kind of solecism to name sadness or grief : since the least exhalation of any discontent is for ever banisht that blessed Region : but as a black sets of, and adds lustre to a rare beauty, so a glance of our condition here beneath, wil render more pretious that blessed state exempt from al misery.

Know therefore in the first place that the goods of this

world are allotted to us for use, not for enjoyment : so that by a mistake in the tenour of the grant , we pervert the orders of our Creator , making that the subject of our enjoyment which is only designed for the convenience of our wel being: hence in reality there is no pleasure or satisfaction upon earth which affords a true and compleat joy. First by reason the nature of what is matter of our joy here is fleeting : next the changeableness of our own humour, vvhich is apt to dote upon this satisfaction to day, to morrow cloyd with it is passionately transported in the pursuit of another : lastly in

that the conclusion of these contentments is for the most part heel'd with repentance : so that tis clear where there is no stability nor security in the matter of our joy , there must needs be either an apprehension of losing it, or weariness in the enjoyment, and consequently no true joy in the possession.

Besides, man is composed of different parts , by the one he is equalled with Angels, by the other rank'd amongst beasts : now al the pleasures of our sensual part are distastful to our spiritual substance : and since most of our delights are such, in proportion they give a check to our rational part : and by

consequence the joy arising from those satisfactions is very imperfect. Ambition which aspires after honour and greatness, is pleased with bended knees, applause of men, and the like: now all these beget no joy in a truly wise man, because the glories of his soul (which alone merit respect) are invisible, and above all the titles of honor the world can give. The satisfaction also which springs from carnal pleasures is much abated by our reason, that looks upon them as too low for an immortal being: the same of all other earthly contentments.

Hence I wonder not that Saint Austin admiring Gods

wisdom in the constitution of this world should cry out : O what infelicity of mankind, the world is bitter, yet beloved, how, if pleasant, would it be doted on : the world is full of disturbance, yet beloved, what would it be in peace and quiet? how would they gather its flowers when now its thorns can not stop their hand? upon this ground he gives a notable caution to beware of the world's smiles, and that we are never more in danger then when we appear to be its darlings, by which you may see besides that the world has no true joy its very seeming joy is dangerous. That we may then arrive at

the fountain of true joy, let us
 joyn issue vvith this great ex-
 perienced Saint, vvho assures that
 the best expedient to Elude al
 its snares are tears, sorrow and
 penitential acts. in pursuance
 Saint Bernard says, O Good
Iesu, if it be so sweet a thing to
weep for you, what wil it be to
rejoyce vvith you? wherefore when
 the blessed shal look back into
 this depraved and corrupted
 world, a Chaos of confusion,
 a place overspread vvith nets of
 temptations, and cluttered vvith
 impediments of salvation, and
 that by Gods assisting grace
 they are dravvn off clear from
 al its hazards, and miseries, O
 vvhat vvings vvil this add to

their joy? vvhhat incentives to spend themselves in the perfume of praise, and becom a perpetual sacrifice of thanks giving for their consummated Glory.

THE PRAYER.

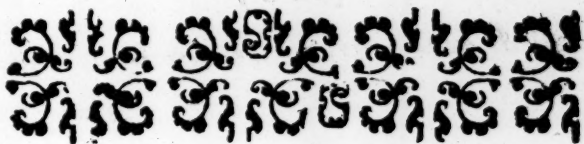
O God, *Thou sage ruler of all things who in the establishment of your great family in this inferior world, hast ordaind the earth for our hope and heaven for our enjoyment : grant that I may never swil my self in the puddle of Earthly pleasures , but stil thirst after those pure refreshments reserved for us in the possession of Beatitude , where a*

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*ful draught wil be reacht to us from
the fountain of al delights; where our
tears shal be converted into pearls to
adorn our Crowns; our sighs and
groans, into the melody of Angels,
and our pious sadness and grief rise
up into endles Jubilies. Amen.*

F I N I S.

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APPROBATIO.

CUM Vir eximie Doctus
mihi declaraverit, librum
cui titulus sequens appositus est,
*Pious Reflections and devout prayers
upon several points of Faith and
morality, from Man's Creation to
his consummation*, Nihil conti-
nere nisi conforme Sanæ Doc-
trinæ & bonis moribus, per-
mitto ut Imprimatur. Datum
Duaci Die 20 Maii. 1695.

NICOLAUS JOSEPHUS DE LA
VERDURE, S. Theologiae Doctor,
& Professor Primarius.